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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

BY

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I am that I am. Exodus III: 14.

To me is seems that human life, small and confined as it is, and as, considered merely in the present, it is likely to remain even when the progress of material and moral improvement may have freed it from the greater part of its present calamities, stands greatly in need of any wider range and greater height of aspiration for itself and its destination, which the exercise of imagination can yield to it without running counter to the evidence of fact; and that it is a part of wisdom to make the most of any, even small, probabilities on this subject, which furnish imaginaton with any footing to support itself upon.

John Stuart Mill.

He who proclaims the existence of the Infinite — and none can avoid it — accumulates in that affirmation more of the supernatural than is to be found in all the miracles of all the religions. For the notion of the infinite presents the double character that it forces itself upon us and yet is incomprehensible. Through it the supernatural is at the bottom of every heart.

Louis Pasteur.

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains —
Are not these, O soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel "I am I?"

Speak to Him for he hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Tennyson.

I that speak unto thee am he. John IV: 26.

PREFACE

THE great questions that may seem farthest away from us are often also nearest to us and most deeply and vitally permeate our life. At the heart of the universe lies the secret of all existence, and the core of this secret is the question of the personality of God. All the interests of our world, the soul and society, law and order, science and art, philosophy and religion, all human worth and hope, run their radii to this center to find their final reality and evaluation. According to our faith at this point will our universe "mean intensely and mean good," or be dust and ashes at the core. And this is not a question that can be shut up within the theologian's study or the philosopher's brain, for it is escaping through every channel into our literature and life. It crops out in our fiction and poetry and in our magazines and daily newspapers, and it lurks behind all our thoughts or comes out into the open. Sometimes it is answered in our popular literature evasively or negatively with an assurance that is born of superficial thought and of meager acquaintance with what the great thinkers from Plato down to our time

have wrought out on this fundamental subject. Questions of trade and government and even of the great war shrink in the presence of this question or derive their ultimate significance and interest from the answer given to it. This little book is an attempt to answer it in terms that can be understood by readers that are not trained in technical theology and philosophy, and it is hoped that it will help to clarify and confirm the instinctive faith and hope that lie latent in every heart.

PITTSBURGH, PA. J. H. S.

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THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

I

INTRODUCTION

1. The question of the personality of God is one of fundamental importance. Our answer to it will frame our conception of God, of his character and worth and relation to the world; shape our view of the universe; determine the reality and worth of our own personality; measure all our values; decide character and destiny; and underlie all our psychology, ethics, economics, sociology, politics, science, philosophy, and religion. As this central, sovereign Personality of the universe stands or falls will all finite personalities and worths abide or wither.

It is therefore no remote, abstract question or curious speculation we are considering, but one that comes home to our business and bosoms and enters into every drop of blood in our veins. Decide it negatively, and everything goes down in the market; not an acre of ground or a steel beam, much less will not a human soul, be worth as much as before. De-

cide it positively, and everything goes up in value; all our goods will be enhanced and human life will be enormously raised in rank and crowned with permanent worth. The question is now a burning one in our popular thought and life and has got out into the street and market, and more and more it will shape and color our character and conduct and our whole civilization.

2. A word may be said as to the means and methods of solving the problem, and as to the degree of assurance we may have in the result reached. It might seem that the question is so vast and runs so far beyond all our faculties that it is impossible for us to solve it or to get any probable or possible light upon it, and that all our thinking about it is only fanciful and futile speculation. One quick solution of the problem is the agnostic answer, that our very faculties are incapable of reaching or catching any glimpse of the nature of God, and that we are hopelessly shut up within our own finite limitations of impotence. But our minds are made to think about big things, and the very heavens cannot set bounds to our faculties; and, as for the agnostic answer, it is equally fatal, as we shall see, to all knowledge and precludes us from knowing the least as well as the largest things.

The means and methods of solving this problem

are the same as those by which we try to answer any question however great or small. Perception, observation, comparison, combination of objects into larger units, tracing of causal links and connections, the use of analogy, the deduction of principles and their wider application, constructive thought and imagination, all the means and methods of experience apply to this problem and lead us toward its solution. Great care and caution should be exercised as we walk these dizzy heights. Prejudice and dogmatism, superficial reasoning and hasty conclusions, should be avoided. The trustworthiness of the human mind, when critically used, as an organ of knowledge is an assumption which must underlie this undertaking as it does all our reasoning in any field. We must trust something before we can know anything, and the mind must trust itself or it cannot prove or disprove anything. If it cannot know that it is trustworthy, then it cannot know that it is untrustworthy, and all knowledge is at an end. From a very small base on the earth the astronomer determines the distance of the sun and stars, and from a seemingly small area of thought in the brain the mind dares to think its way up to God and catch a vision of his nature.

3. The conclusion thus reached is one of probability. Few of our results are of any other degree of assur-

ance, and only in mathematical demonstrations do we reach absolute certainty, and even this is doubted by some thinkers. All our practical conclusions rest on probability of greater or less degree. And such knowledge answers our practical purposes, and we act upon it with full confidence. We may not demonstrate the personality of God so as to put it beyond the doubt of skeptical or thoughtful minds, but we may reach it along many converging lines of probability which meet in a focus of faith that becomes a practical assurance and guidance in action.

4. Our belief in God and in his personality is much older and deeper than our reasoning and proofs in connection with it. It is a constitutional instinct and impulse which begins to act with the beginning of human experience and grows with its growth as a practical need and necessity. Our inherited and instinctive sense of dependence and spiritual yearning pushes us immediately into religious belief and life, just as our physical hunger impels us to seek food and our mental faculties feed on knowledge. God is thus a practical necessity to give meaning and worth, purpose and power, to our life; and if we found no God waiting to match and satisfy our needs we would be forced to invent one. We do not prove the existence of God and then believe in him, but we first believe in him and then

construct arguments to confirm our belief. Destroy all our intellectual arguments for God, and we would believe in him still. Kant, having disproved, as he believed, the possibility of knowing God through the intellect, fell back on his practical need for God and believed in him as a necessary moral postulate. God hath set eternity in our heart, and therefore eternity comes out of our heart before we reason on the ground and nature of this belief.

And so we start this argument for the personality of God with belief in him already embedded in our whole nature, and this instinctive belief is likely to have its way whatever may be our logical conclusion. Great agnostics, such as Spencer and Huxley, themselves illustrate and prove this fact. However they may deny God, they find some way of slipping back to him. Though philosophy should sever the intellectual threads that bind us to God, yet mysticism has bound us to him with deeper threads that the knife of philosophy cannot reach.

But if our belief in a personal God is deeper and more secure than all our logic, why go through all this unnecessary reasoning? If this "intellectual business is eminently a dust-raising process," why stir up the needless argument and raise the dust? Because the human mind also has an instinct for rational inquiry

and confirmation. It cannot rest content even with the deepest instincts of the heart, but as these emerge into the field of conscious, logical analysis they must submit to this process and justify themselves at the bar of the brain as well as in the mystic chamber of the heart. Our fundamental needs are thus rationalized and confirmed, and they are also clarified and purified, controlled and guided. Our constitutional belief in a personal God passes through this process and comes out confirmed and intensified. Our theistic faith may at first be the mystic feeling of the heart, but it is also at last the reasoned conviction of the mind and then our total faith is deeper and stronger.

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell;
> That mind and soul according well,
> May make one music as before,
>
> But vaster.

II

PERSONALITY IN MAN

We begin our investigation as close to ourselves as possible, down on the ground of personal experience, as the astronomer, when he is about to cast his measuring line out among the stars, takes his stand on the ground under his feet.

1. The first bit of reality we indubitably know is our own soul, self or consciousness. We know this by immediate awareness, or intuition. External objects are known to us through the mediation of the senses, which are of the nature of colored lenses that impose the secondary qualities of matter upon these objects and thereby give them their sensational appearances. A change in the senses, as in the retina of the eye or the tympanum of the ear, would thereby effect a change in the sensational nature of the object and might even transform it profoundly. Sense perception thus gives us knowledge of reality at second-hand, or knowledge that has passed through a process of transmission and transformation. Not so with our knowledge of the

self. We look into our consciousness, not through senses, but directly without any transmitting and transforming medium. We are immediately aware of the self, of its states and activities, and there is thus no room for error or perversion in a process of transmission. The self is at once subject and object with nothing thrust between them, like the senses, to dim or blur the vision. Consciousness becomes self-consciousness, the knowing subject and the known object are identical in one and the same self.

Such knowledge is the clearest and surest we can have. Its stream is not mixed and muddied with the sediment of the senses or perverted with their transforming processes, but it is direct vision and pure light. We thus know ourselves better than we know anything else. Here is our first knowledge of reality. It is not knowledge of a phenomenon, as is our knowledge of the external world which consists of appearances or symbolic representations of things, but our self-knowledge is knowledge of the noumenon, of immediate reality, or of the thing in itself. We have in our own self a bit of ultimate reality, and this leads us strongly toward the conclusion that we have in the soul a sample of all reality, one of the tiny bricks of which the universe is built.

2. We now note that this first piece of reality is

personal spirit or is constituted as personality. Few words have been the center and subject of so much controversy and confusion of thought as personality; and as it is fundamental in our discussion we offer the following definition: Personality is the distinctive state of a person; and a person is an individual being endowed with consciousness consisting of perceptive and reflective thought, sensibility, and responsible will. We are immediately aware of these three fundamental faculties or modes of activity fused into the unity of our consciousness. We think, we feel, we will; we do these three things, and we never can do more or less. In our consciousness we are always thinking and feeling and willing simultaneously. Any one of these modes may at any one moment be predominant and seem to submerge the others, but the three are always acting together, though in varying degrees and combinations.

The intellect is the knowing power of the mind, by which we are aware of our mental faculties and processes by immediate intuition and of external objects by the medium of the senses. The streams of sensation pour in upon us through the senses, and then the mind works up these raw materials into objects, or casts the fluid material in its own mental molds, and thus makes the products of its thought. In this pro-

cess the faculties of perception, apperception, association, memory, imagination, and reasoning are active and contribute each its own peculiar element to the product, and thus the intellect, or person, knows.

Feeling is a general state of excitement that is experienced by the soul on occasion of its cause. Sensations are the result of the direct action of objects on the senses, or nerves, and emotions are feelings excited by ideas or the presence of objects. It is the feelings that create our interest in objects and give us our sense of their value. Without the play of our feelings objects of knowledge would present to us the aspect of colorless reality, and one thing would not mean more to us than another; but our feelings invest them with various degrees of value so that they appeal to us with varying degrees of interest. Feelings are also the motives that pour as a stream upon the will and move it to action. We never act until we feel, and the volume and intensity of the feeling determine the degree of decision and energy with which we act.

The will is the soul in action or the soul controlling itself. The stream of ideas and feelings that pour into consciousness is not an ungovernable flood on which the self drifts helplessly, like a log or a boat without rudder or engine on a swift current, but the soul has a rudder and an engine by which it can steer and drive

its boat to its own destination. It chooses and acts, not arbitrarily or under the compulsion of necessary forces, but by its own free choice under the play of motives. These motives, however, are not dead and fixed weights dropped upon the soul from without, which necessarily determine it, but are subject to the soul's own judgment and evaluation. We make and choose the motives that move us, and this fact is the very center and pivot of our free agency and responsibility. The will is thus the spinal column and unifying power of personality, the throne of this kingdom, the crown and captain of the self. The soul with all its faculties and activities is a unitary organism in which the whole enters into each operation, and it is characterized in its totality by growth, habit, law, liberty, purpose, and responsibility. It is this unitary self that constitutes personality.

3. Yet the soul is a very complex and wealthy world, its unity diverging into variety and deep distinctions. It has a varied and rich capacity of perceiving and feeling and acting on different kinds or aspects of the complex manifold of reality. When acting on objects in their intellectual nature it has knowledge; when acting on them in their esthetic nature it has a sense of beauty; when acting on them in their ethical nature it has a sense of duty; and when acting on them in their

relations to God it is exercising its sense of worship and experiencing religion.

The complexity of the soul further consists of a trinity in unity. One cleavage of its unity into trinity is found in its threefold division of thought, sensibility, and will, which we have already noted. The soul acts in these three constitutional ways which are distinct and yet cohere in a deeper unity. Another and perhaps more significant trinitarian cleavage of the unity of the soul is into subject and object and their relation. In self-consciousness each one knows himself, first, as the conscious subject which is thinking; second, as the conscious object which is thought about; and third, as the conscious relation and unity of the two. This trinity makes the soul sufficient in itself for maintaining a conscious life, constituting it as a kind of society capable of self-examination, meditation, communion, and a whole inner life of its own. Without this constitution the soul would be incapable of self-consciousness and reflection and would be reduced to the level of animal objective awareness. This constitution is the foundation and beginning of the social nature and life of the soul, unfolds in the social life of human society, and reaches its full completion and satisfaction in fellowship with God. This trinity in unity of the human soul will be found to be of fundamental significance

when we come to consider the constitution of the personality of God.

4. Personality is also subject to degree and growth. It begins in the human being as a germ in the child, unfolds into its full-blown powers in the man, and exists in a wide range of degrees from the peasant to the philosopher. It rises into full tide and glow of thought and feeling in consciousness in a state of excitement, then subsides into dullness and drowsiness, and finally sinks into the subconscious in sleep. This subconsciousness is a great deep, the underground world and night life of the soul, where all our memories and experiences are stored, to emerge at call into consciousness; and it may be much deeper and larger than our conscious self, just as seven-eighths of an iceberg is submerged in the sea. Though we know our own self better than anything else, yet it is full of vast unexplored deeps and unfathomable mysteries. "We attribute far too small dimensions to the rich empire of the self, if we omit from it the unconscious region which resembles a dark continent. The world which our memory peoples, only reveals in its revolution a few luminous points at a time; while its immense and teeming mass remains in shade. . . . We daily see the conscious passing into unconsciousness; and take no notice of the bass accompaniment which our fingers

continue to play, while our attention is directed to fresh musical effects."

Below personality in man we find subpersonality in animals, and this descending and ascending scale logically runs up, as we shall later see, into superpersonality in God.

Our knowledge of this constitution of the soul, it may again be said, is not a product of our sense perception or of any kind of inference, but is an intuition or an act and fact of immediate awareness, the identity of the conscious subject and the conscious object, which is the primary and most certain knowledge we have.

The soul, or self, may be subjected to fierce criticism designed to prove its instability and unreality, a mere bubble floating on the stormy sea of the world, as F. H. Bradley attempts to do in his *Appearance and Reality;* but the same dialectic that thus dissolves the soul dissolves its own argument along with the soul and leaves no result; and the fact remains that the soul not only survives this criticism but perdures through all vicissitudes, and however violently it may be strained under the stress of inner experience or shocked by the impact of the outer world, it abides as a unitary consciousness and identical self.

This self is the starting point and foundation of all our knowledge from the lowest and least up to the

greatest truth. The inner world of the soul is a miniature copy of the great world of the universe and of God himself. We see things, not only as they are, but also as we are, and what we see without depends on what we are within.

> Watch narrowly
> The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
> And you trace back the effluence to its spring
> And source within us; where broods radiance vast,
> To be elicited ray by ray.
>
> — *Browning.*

III

THE PASSAGE FROM MAN TO GOD

We are now prepared to make the passage from man to God as the astronomer leaps from his tiny arc on the earth to the sun and stars. In all our science we are constantly stepping up on small things to things inconceivably great, even from the finite to the infinite, and we are only following this principle in passing from the personality of man to the personality of God. When once we find a center we do not hesitate to sweep the circle, however long its radius and vast its circumference.

1. The first fact to note as the initial step in the argument at this point is that human personality is a part and product of the world. It is self-evidently not a self-existing and eternal being, but a finite entity that had a beginning and a cause. It arose in a germinal form out of the womb of the world and by a process of growth attained its full development. It is therefore an effect, and this origin is written all over and through its constitution. That human personality is a product

calling for a sufficient cause is one of the most solid and certain facts of our knowledge.

2. It is an intuition and axiom of all our thinking that every event must have a cause, every product has sprung from a power. This is a self-evident truth which cannot be proved by any logical process because it is an ultimate unanalyzable principle that cannot be resolved into simpler elements. It is more certain than any proof that could be brought either for it or against it. All our reasoning does not strengthen it, and all our speculative doubts do not weaken it. Try as we will we cannot conceive of anything springing into existence without a cause back of it. We may not know what the cause behind an event is, but we know it is there. And the cause must be sufficient to account for the whole of the effect, otherwise there is a part of the effect that is not accounted for, and something has then come into existence without a cause.

The application of this principle to personality in man is now direct and conclusive. Man being a personal product, the cause of man must also be a personal Power. The simple statement of this step shows its logical soundness and necessity, and there is no escaping it. The Power that produced man must at the least and lowest be personal, whatever the process, whether by evolution or otherwise, by which the effect

was caused. If this Power is not personal, then it has produced in man something higher than itself, and thereby the cause falls short of the effect and something has come out of nothing. The effect always shows what was potentially in the cause and never can go beyond it; the stream, to use the classical illustration, never can rise higher than its source. The personality we find in the world is therefore a proof that there must at least be an equal kind and degree of being in the cause of the world, and thus we mount with sure footing at one step from the personality of man to the personality of God.

This argument is short and old, but its simplicity and the fact that it has stood the test of time are its strength, and it has lost nothing of its certainty amidst all our modern knowledge. It is true that we may be staggered by this momentous conclusion and think that a basis apparently so narrow and frail cannot bear a weight so tremendous. But the astronomer does not fear that the minute arc of earth under his feet will crumble when he rests on it the whole mass and magnitude of the heavens, and the mathematician does not lose faith in his curves and equations when they sweep out into infinity. The validity of a conclusion is not affected by its vastness when its logical basis is sound. The principle of causation is the surest logical basis in

our mental constitution, and we should not doubt its validity and verdict when it carries us straight from our own personality to the personality of God. Our human personality reflects the divine personality as the tiny dewdrop mirrors the mighty sun.

> Take all in a word: the truth in God's breast
> Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed:
> Though he is so bright and we so dim.
> We are made in his image to witness him.
>
> — *Browning.*

IV

THE WITNESS OF THE WORLD OF NATURE TO THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

THE world of nature, on any philosophical view, is an outgrowth and manifestation of the First Cause that underlies it. It is a product on a vast scale. Does this product reveal in any degree the nature of the Power producing it? Can we read backward from the effect to its cause? This principle underlies all our science and reasoning and is trustworthy on the largest as on the smallest scale.

The world bears witness to the personality of God because it discloses intelligence, sensibility, and will inwrought into its whole fabric and constitution. This fact has been written out in great and ever-growing libraries of books and can here only be hinted at.

1. That the world is orderly, intelligible, and purposeful is the principle that underlies and guides the whole search of science, and all science confirms it as its final result. The astronomer finds that he can understand the heavens and read them like a book. The vast expanse of the sky is the real astronomy which he reads

and then copies upon the tiny pages of his book. The geologist, physicist, chemist, and all other scientists are doing the same thing, each in his own field. They find that the whole web of the world of nature, down to its finest filaments, is woven of intellectual threads and is a tissue of mental ideas and relations. They have absolute confidence in its intellectuality down into its deepest depth and darkest corner and to its last atom and electron. They believe that they could understand it through and through if they could get at it or bring it under the power of their faculties. There is not a particle of unreason or mental absurdity in the whole universe. The world is thus found to be a mental construction that reveals the presence and working of a Mind as certainly as a book reveals to us the mind of its author. Intellect is one of the essential constituents of personality, and it shines out through the whole face of nature. In the eloquent words of Dr. James Martineau: "What have we found by moving out along all the radii into the infinite? That the whole is woven together in one sublime tissue of intellectual relations, geometrical and physical — the realized original, of which all our science is but a partial copy. That science is the crowning product and supreme expression of human reason. . . . Unless therefore it takes more mental faculty to construe the universe than to cause it,

to read the book of nature than to write it, we must more than ever look upon its sublime face as the living appeal of thought to thought."

2. In a similar way the world is found to be a manifestation of sensibility. It stirs every emotion of our souls, or it is a million-stringed harp which evokes and responds to all the feelings of our complex emotional nature. It is stamped with majesty and sublimity, richly carved and painted, embroidered and jeweled with beauty, and saturated and drenched with music. Joy suffuses the world of life. Nature even strikes deeper ethical notes. At least the germs of honesty and righteousness are exhibited in the law and order and reward and retribution that are imbedded in the constitution of the world. Ethical sensibility comes to its fullest expression in nature in its altruism. Mother love is a strong and beautiful affection in the higher animals, and the altruistic principle runs down into the primal cells of life. As Henry Drummond has so strikingly shown, the struggle for life is more than matched by the struggle for the life of others, beginning with the first division of a cell, and evolution is thus not simply a tale of battle, with nature "red in tooth and claw with ravin," but it is also a love story as beautiful as any romance. And thus nature leads us to see in it a great Artist, and to feel beating in it the

heart of a great Lover. And, as feeling is another constituent element of personality, we again mount our nature up to the personality of God.

3. The world also manifests itself to us as will. When we press on it at any point, it presses back against us, just as one hand may oppose the other hand, will acting in both; and the harder we press against it the harder it presses against us, acting like another will opposing our own. Will is essentially activity, and nature is universally and ceaselessly active in all its masses, molecules, atoms, and electrons. Will is energy, and all the energies of the world act as manifestations of will. We never catch nature except when it is doing something and acting like a will. Gravitation operates like a mighty muscle or system of muscles, and all the energies of nature admit of the same interpretation. Will acts toward ends, it is purposeful, and all the energies of the world are teleological, working according to plan and purpose. The whole system of the world appears to be a living will, and the world is thus pervaded by this third constituent of personality.

4. As intelligence, sensibility, and will are fused into the unity of consciousness, so are the intelligence, sensibility, and will manifested in the world fused into the grand unity of the universe. The soul, as we have

seen, is marked by growth, law, habit, and purpose, and these are inwrought into the whole constitution of nature. And thus the universe manifests itself to us in terms of personality, or as a vast if not infinite Person. As the soul is a little world, so the world is a great Soul.

It may be said, however, that the world does not present the appearance of a person, as does our body organized as the manifestation and instrument of the soul. Where is there any slightest semblance of organs, body, brain, and nerves, in the world? But life does not always organize for itself the same form or type of body. Vegetable life assumes various shapes, animal life breaks into myriad bodily forms, and man has developed his own type of body. God does not manifest his spirit in a body after any of these types because he does not need such a body and transcends it. But none the less he does manifest in the world his intelligence and sensibility and will in their unitary nature and operation, and thereby reveals himself as clearly, and accomplishes his purposes as fully, as he could do through a body organized after the type of our own; rather such a body would be an encumbrance to him and infinitely inferior to the universe in which he is immanent.

The world thus confronts us with a threefold aspect

of thought, sensibility, and will, and these point with direct and inescapable logic to the manifold nature of the First Cause and the complex personality of God.

> So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too —
> So, through the thunder comes a human voice
> Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
> Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
> But love I gave thee, with myself to love."
>
> — *Browning.*

V

THE WITNESS OF RELIGION TO THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

We have already seen that our human personality reflects the personality of God, but we now pass to the reflection of the divine personality in our human world in its moral and spiritual nature.

1. The moral nature of man imposes on him a sense of obligation of right, which implies a Law-giver and falls to the ground without this support and final validation. Conscience becomes an empty voice and mockery in the infinite void of the universe without a Supreme Court and Judge. Through all the ages rolls the solemn voice of human conscience witnessing to a moral Person on the throne of the world. "If death gives final discharge," says Dr. Martineau, "alike to the sinner and the saint, we are warranted in saying that conscience has told more lies than it has ever called to their account."

2. The religious nature of man is a still clearer and more convincing witness. Through all ages and in all lands the whole earth has been one great altar from

which has risen worship by humanity. The deepest feeling of humanity is its sense of dependence on God, and its greatest need and most urgent cry was voiced by Augustine: "O God, thou hast made us for thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in thee." While in some forms, notably in the pantheistic religions of India, religion has lapsed into impersonal views of God, yet in its most general, and especially in its highest and purest forms, it has borne witness in the clearest and intensest convictions and voices to his personality; and even pantheistic religions are found, more or less indirectly and unconsciously, to be slipping into faith in and worship of some personal form of God. All the elements and activities of religion demand a personal God as their object and fulfillment. Dependence, penitence, faith, obedience, fellowship, love, loyalty in service and sacrifice, trust in life and in death — these are meaningless except as they find their appropriate object and satisfaction in a personal God and Father.

Worship cannot be resolved into mere wonder at the majesty and mystery of the universe according to Herbert Spencer's theory, or into John Morley's "feelings for the incommensurable things," or J. R. Seeley's "permanent and habitual admiration," or Edward Caird's "a man's attitude to the universe," or Matthew Arnold's "morality touched with emotion."

Men simply cannot in any legitimate sense pray to and worship an "Unknown Power" or Infinite Conundrum or Eternal Interrogation Point. Such an exercise of the soul would be bitter mockery.

In his experience man finds a personal God in prayer and worship, fellowship and obedience. He seeks him by a deep primal instinct and impulse which drives him to God as hunger and thirst drive him to food and water. He speaks to him with the confidence of a child to a father and pours out his soul to him. He confesses to him his open faults and secret sins, and beseeches him for pardon, purity, and peace. He looks for indications of God's guidance and follows the gleam. "Thou wilt light my candle." He catches from God visions of right and goodness, ideals of perfection, of duty, of service and sacrifice, of battles to be fought against hosts of darkness, and of a kingdom of truth and light, of brotherhood and love, to be built; and he girds himself up for the battle and throws himself into the service and pours out of his heart the last drop of devotion and sacrifice. His very sorrows only drive him closer to the throne of grace as he falls on the great world's altar stairs which slope through darkness up to God.

Religion is one of the deepest, widest, and most pow-

erful and permanent facts of the world. Professor Alfred Marshall opens his great work, *The Principles of Economics,* with the statement that "the two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic. Here and there the ardor of the military or the artistic spirit has been for a while predominant: but religious and economic influences have nowhere been displaced from the front rank even for a time; and they have nearly always been more important than all others put together." This religious nature of man finds instinctive and necessary expression, and the great religions of the world are its outgrowth and fruit.

Religion, then, is not a superstition that is waning and withering in the light of our modern knowledge, but it is a constitutional principle in humanity which grows with all human growth and comes to its highest and purest forms and greatest worth in our highest civilization and culture. Science and philosophy cannot kill it, but only plant it more deeply than ever in the world. Reason did not create it, and reason cannot destroy it. It has given birth to all that is noblest and best in our life. It is the vital breath of this world and the hope of the next. All other instincts of our nature find their appropriate satisfaction. Shall the instinct

of the bird and the bee be true, and this instinct of the human heart be false? Unless religion is all a lie it is a true witness to the personality of God.

I go to prove my soul!
I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive; what time, what circuit first,
I ask not: but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time!

— *Browning.*

VI

THE WITNESS OF CHRISTIAN REVELATION

THAT Christianity is the highest and purest form of religion will be denied by few, and that it is the universal and final religion is affirmed by its adherents. While it has universal elements in the universal sovereignty and Fatherhood of God and in his immanence in the world as "the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding to man," "the true light that lighteth every man coming into the world," yet it was specially introduced into the world through a particular people.

1. The Hebrews were endowed with religious genius, as the Greeks were with intellectual and artistic gifts, and the Romans with political organization and power. They were the most sensitive race in the world to the presence of God, the mountain peak that caught the light of his face earlier than other people and reflected it down upon the world. Their great prophets in the Old Testament times, Moses and Isaiah, stood on the tip of this peak and saw the light so that their own faces shone and men saw in them the reflection of

Jehovah. They looked at God face to face and told the world what they saw. In the New Testament the comparatively dim and reflected light of the Old burst clear and full from the direct presence of God in Christ and was further reflected in the teaching and work of the apostles. John and Paul stood close to the Light of the World and caught its beams and threw them far and wide out over succeeding centuries.

All this light has been gathered into the Bible as into a focus, where it shines to this day. The whole essential spiritual experience of the Hebrew people, from their earliest prophets down to their latest apostles, has been rcorded in this Book which transmits it to us and recreates it in us in words which "are spirit and are life."

The outstanding fact in this inspired people and in their inspired Book is the personality of God. Abraham, the father of the faithful and the founder of this remarkable race, born and bred in the midst of heathen idolatry and polytheism, saw and seized the great truth of the one true and living God and followed the gleam of this light out of his native country into the promised land, where this truth was to take root and grow into the religion that is now beginning to dominate the world. The name by which God revealed himself to Moses, "I am that I am," intensified to the sharpest

point the divine personality and drove it deep into the consciousness and worship of the whole Hebrew race. The prophets of the chosen people, through all their racial and national vicissitudes, development in religious experience and political power, temptations and tears, trials and triumphs, captivity and deliverance, never lost sight of Jehovah as their personal God and Redeemer; and the whole history of the Hebrews prepared the way for the fullness of time when the Messiah, the fulfillment of their prophecies and prayers and passionate hopes, came into the world.

2. In Jesus Christ we have the Messiah whose divine nature and Saviourhood are established by many proofs. His matchless character, combining into balanced poise and power and perfection all virtues and graces, even those that seem somewhat irreconcilable and contradictory; his wonderful life, compressed into one shining line, "who went about doing good"; his mighty works in mastering nature, the sparks of his divinity; his compassion and tenderness and forgiveness that drew people of all classes and conditions to himself; his spirit of service and sacrifice, culminating in his sacrificial death on the cross; the great seal that was put upon his divinity in his resurrection and ascension; the Christian church, which is his mighty monument; and all the Christian centuries that date their cal-

endar from his birth and revolve around him as their pivotal center — all this light converges on him and declares him with power to be the Son of God.

And now Jesus bears witness to the personality of God in his experience and teaching and in his own person. In his experience he held constant fellowship with the Father, ever called him "my Father," and declared: "The Father hath not left me alone." In his teaching he taught men to say: "Our Father," and ever presented God in the light of his Fatherhood. In his own person he was filled with the fullness of God, and was the express image of his person and the brightness of his glory. Jesus is the revelation of God, the incarnation of his nature, the unveiling of his glory, the sunrise and sunburst of God. Jesus is God come down so that we can see him. "And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." All the glory of God that could be crowded into human flesh and soul was in him and shone out of him. And so he stands transfigured before us, steeped and soaked in the splendor of God. In seeing him we see the Father. Jesus is thus a visible image of God, and therefore the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is a personal God.

Jesus was not only a human person, but he also escaped human limitations, transcended human con-

sciousness, and slipped away into the infinite and eternal. His personality had divine capacities and contents. He lived in space and time and yet transcended them. "Before Abraham was, I am." "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." These words, that would be absurd and indicate insanity or imposture on other lips, calmly fell from his as transparent sincerity and truth and were perfectly natural to him. He stepped up upon the throne of the universe and sat in judgment upon the world, and yet such an act was not infinite presumption and folly in him, but was only his proper right and dignity.

The problem of the person of Christ is one of the profoundest in Christian theology, and is so mysterious that it is for us insoluble. No theory of it we can construct can be carried through without encountering grave embarrassments. That he is both human and divine is the teaching of Scripture and the verdict of the ages. We see him as a person of like passions with ourselves, and we see him escaping these limitations into the divine. His personality, then, cannot be constructed on and confined to our human pattern. His consciousness cannot be crowded into our human mold. He transcends us and shoots above us into the infinite. His personality, therefore, is of a higher type than

ours, and again we are approaching the conception of superpersonality which we have already encountered.

3. The complex personality of God is set forth in the Scriptures in the threefold constitution of the Godhead as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures, but the fact is imbedded in every part of them. It begins in a germinal form in the Old Testament and unfolds into clearer forms down to the end of the New Testament. Each of these Persons is represented as distinct from the others, and yet together they constitute one Godhead. The personal names and pronouns, I and thou, he and him, are constantly applied to them, and never are they represented as impersonal forces or influences. They speak and act as persons in all their relations to one another and to the world. Of course, the doctrine must be kept clear of tritheism, for polytheism in any form was foreign and abhorrent to Hebrew thought, as it is to our modern philosophy. It is also true that the word person is unfortunate and misleading in some of its implications as implying human limitations and a separate substance. The three Persons in the Trinity are truly Persons in the sense that each one has a degree of independent thought and feeling and will, and yet these three cohere in the higher synthesis of one unitary spirit and life,

which is the complex personality of the triune God.

The personality of God is thus of an infinitely higher type than our human personality and leads us to the conception of superpersonality, which will come up later for fuller discussion. We shall then see that the doctrine of the Trinity is not an outworn and absurd dogma of mediæval or ancient ecclesiastical speculation, but adumbrates a distinction imbedded in the constitution of God and is the necessary condition of his infinite life. As Dr. Samuel Harris states it in his work on *God Creator and Lord of All:* "The Trinity proves itself to be, in its essential contents, the only worthy and satisfactory philosophical conception of God and of his revelation of himself in the finite. As revealed in the God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, it is essential to supplement the half truths of philosophy, to clear away its seeming contradictions, to harmonize the philosophical conception of God with that of religious faith and the revelation in the Bible, and to give a reasonable, comprehensive, and self-consistent idea of him."

In the same line of thought Dr. J. R. Illingworth writes in his *Personality Human and Divine:* "The Unitarian imagines his conception of God, as an undifferentiated unity, to be simpler than the Christian. But it cannot really be translated into thought. It can-

not be thought out. Whereas the Christian doctrine, however mysterious, moves in the direction, at least, of conceivability, for the simple reason that it is the very thing towards which our own personality points. Our own personality is triune; but it is potential, unrealized triunity, which is incomplete in itself, and must go beyond itself for completion, as, for example, in the family. If, therefore, we are to think of God as personal, it must be by what is called the method of eminence (*via eminentiæ*) — the method, that is, which considers God as possessing, in transcendent perfection, the same attributes which are imperfectly possessed by man. He must, therefore, be pictured as One whose triunity has nothing potential or unrealized about it; whose triune elements are eternally actualized, by no outward influence, but from within; a Trinity in Unity; a social God, with all the conditions of personal existence internal to himself."

It is true that this doctrine launches us out upon deeps our longest plummet line cannot fathom. God is infinitely greater than we can know or conceive; but the infinitude of God does not impair the validity and value of our finite knowledge of him. "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?"

Christian revelation, then, in all its elements, history and development, prophet and apostle, sacrifice and symbol, psalm and proverb, gospel and epistle, in all the books of the Bible in Old Testament and New, bears witness to the personality of God; and all its light is converged on Jesus, the Christ, who stands forth enveloped in its splendor and crowned as the Son who is the express image and bright glory of the personal God.

> I say the acknowledgement of God in Christ
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise.
>
> — *Browning.*

VII

TENTATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

We have now reached a point where we may attempt a tentative construction of the personality of God. The goal lies infinitely beyond us, and yet we cannot escape the desire and endeavor to catch a glimpse of it or at least to throw our thoughts out toward it. The effort is legitimate and necessary, but in this attempt we need to restrain any dogmatic presumption and exercise the utmost caution and modesty.

1. The analogy of the human to the divine personality gives us a clue to follow. We have already seen the basic identity of personality in man and in God, and this stands as the foundation of our reasoning at this point. The personality of God is the cause of personality in man, and cause and effect are necessarily of like nature. Cause and effect, however, may differ widely in degree. No effect shows the whole capacity and contents of the cause. A single beam of light is not the whole sun. Personality in man is only a gleam of personality in God. God is infinite in nature and

power, and therefore human personality only reflects a finite image of the divine personality. It is true that we must hold that human personality is similar in nature to the divine personality as far as it goes; but it goes only a little way, and the human is only a tiny copy and pale reflection of the divine.

Personality, as we have seen, is subject to growth and is found in widely different stages of development and degrees of mental power. There is an enormous difference between the soul of an infant and that of a mature man, and between that of a savage and that of a philosopher.[1] Vastly greater differences separate the mind of man from such soul-life and subpersonality as we see manifested in animals. The mind of even the highest animal falls immeasurably below the mind of man. While it exhibits degrees of intelligence, sensibility, and will, yet these are in such a rudimentary stage that they do not rise into self-conscious thought and free will, and so do not reach personality. Animals are at best only partial selves, and so belong to a lower order of beings than man. But now, as there are orders of being below man, are there not also or-

[1] At this and at one or two other places in these pages a few paragraphs have been taken with modifications from the author's *The World a Spiritual System* and *Can We Believe in Immortality?* (both published by The Macmillan Company, New York), where some of these points are more fully considered.

ders far above him? May there not be faculties of mind and heart higher and more powerful than any we know, and may not these be organized into personality that lies infinitely above the level of human personality? It is not at all likely that the human soul is the topmost and ultimate blossom on the mystic Tree of Life; rather we may think of it as only a bud or germ which points to a perfect Mind or Spirit in which all human limitations and imperfections are transcended, so that intelligence is omniscience and will is omnipotence. The vastness and complexity and mystery of the universe indicate a causative Mind which is inconceivably if not infinitely greater than our own. The divine Mind, or God, then, rises above the human mind into personality which is infinitely higher in its faculties and organization. Such a Mind transcends our mind as ours transcends that of an animal or vegetable.

2. We cannot conceive such a Mind, because it lies above the level of our experience, but we are not without some chart and compass in launching out upon this deep. The divine Mind cannot be anything lower than our consciousness, but must lie above it, and we naturally attempt to gain some hint of it by removing the imperfections and limitations from the human mind and projecting it toward the infinite and absolute. Of

course we must at once set aside all imperfections and faults due to our human sin. Sin has deeply infected and perverted our human personality, blunting its intellectual faculties and corrupting its passions and weakening its will, but no such stain or shadow rests upon the personality of God.

Does God think and feel and will as we think and feel and will? We must believe that he thinks and feels and wills, but not after our finite fashion or degree. His thinking is to be conceived as being free from all human limitations. Our intellect is limited in all its operations, so that we never can reach the utmost bound of truth. Every problem it solves only brings into view a hundred others that are not solved, so that its conscious ignorance grows faster than its knowledge. However vast the circle of light of its expanding knowledge, vaster still is the outlying sphere of darkness that shuts it in. Doubt also constitutionally inheres in human knowledge, and no human thinker can escape from doubt any more than he can escape from his own shadow or slip out of his own skin. Again, the human mind uses the instrumental processes of sense perception and discursive reasoning by which it gathers facts and builds up knowledge, and thus its knowledge of objective reality is only mediate and not intuitive. We can imagine all these limita-

tions upon our human mind widened out indefinitely, and in perfect personality all such limits would be completely removed or transcended and this would give us omniscience in the mind of God. God knows all things by immediate awareness or intuition. "His understanding is infinite."

Does the divine mind think in the intuitions or mental forms of space and time as we do? God projects his thoughts upon the field of our consciousness in these forms, but are the forms purely subjective in our minds, or are they also forms of his mind? It would be rash to give a dogmatic answer to this question, and here even speculation grows thin to the vanishing point. We cannot affirm that God thinks in terms of space or projects his thoughts in spatial forms, and it may be that this form lies wholly within the field of our human consciousness. But, on the other hand, as our minds are copies of his, it may be that the spatial form we experience is the shadow or symbolic representative of some corresponding though transcendent form in his experience. The temporal form inheres more closely than the spatial in the reality of the mind itself, its experiences being successive but not spatial. Our temporal experience depends on the length of our time-span, or the period of consciousness during which successive objects or moments of consciousness are simul-

taneously present to the mind, a period that is usually estimated at two or three seconds. Removing this limit from our time-span would result in a consciousness in which all things are logically successive and yet eternally present. Such a temporal consciousness, we may suppose, is a hint of the divine mind. God is conscious of time, but not in time, and all time is to him an eternal now. He does not exist in temporal succession, but all temporal succession exists in him. The poet Henry Vaughn had some such dream of eternity in his strangely beautiful lines:

> I saw Eternity the other night,
> Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
> All calm, as it was bright;
> And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years.
> Driv'n by the spheres
> Like a vast shadow mov'd; in which the world
> And all her train were hurl'd.

As to feeling, we must remove from our thought of God's emotional life all the imperfections of our emotional experience. Anything in the nature of evil disposition or passion in him is abhorrent to our thought; and we must also remove all fitfulness and fickleness, uncontrolled gusts and outbreaks of feeling; irritability and fretfulness, ill-balanced and extreme or deficient emotions, personal bias and selfishness. There must be vast masses and profound depths of

emotion in the life of God, pure and calm, deep and strong, rich and joyous and jubilant, compared with which the deepest and most glorious emotional experiences of humanity are only as single gleams of light compared with the total splendor of the sun. Not only so, the emotional life of God not only rises to higher levels and fathoms deeper depths, but it also may differ in faculty and organization from that of the human soul.

The will of God must differ deeply from the human will. The human will is obstructed by barriers without and within and must use means to effect its ends. But as the divine mind has immediate knowledge of all things, and is freed from the use of sense perception and discursive processes, so the divine will must achieve its ends without the use of intermediate means. God is not hampered as we are by limited power, but all power is his, and with him thought and action, the will to do and the deed itself, are one. "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." With him, to speak is to do, to will is to create. Thought and action are fused into one free and frictionless stream of life.

It may be thought that a consciousness possessed of such powers of omniscient intelligence and omnipotent will cannot be called consciousness at all, and that, in

particular, it cannot be supposed to have personality. Does it not differ so radically both in degree and in nature as to be something other than consciousness and personality as we know these modes of reality? This difficulty, especially as regards personality, will come up later, but for the present we may say that we are not without some gleams of light. We know that consciousness exists in different degrees and that these differences may be enormous. We are able to widen out the barriers of ignorance that bound our knowledge, and we can imagine this process carried out indefinitely. Genius grasps by intuition many things that ordinary minds must reach through slow discursive processes. The gap between will and deed is often shortened up in our human experience. A musical genius thinks and wills a musical theme and composition by one stroke of mind, and poetic thought and poetic expression may coincide in the poet's imagination. We can conceive all these processes carried indefinitely toward the point where human limitations would disappear, and these forms of genius are hints and germs of unlimited consciousness. While, then, the divine consciousness rises above all our imperfections and limitations, yet it does not lose its fundamental character as mind and personality.

3. We proceed further with unfolding the analogy

of our human personality into its implications in the divine personality. We have seen that our human personality, while a unitary, is yet a complex, world. Does this complexity reflect the mind of God in its elements and organization? Does the trinity of thought, feeling, and will and the deeper trinity of the conscious subject, the conscious object, and the conscious union of the two, that enter into the very constitution of human personality, also inhere in the divine personality, or is the consciousness of God absolutely unitary? Reflection drives us strongly towards the former rather than the latter view. An absolutely unitary consciousness involves us in grave difficulties. It would obliterate distinctions in the divine consciousness and thereby make conscious reflection and feeling and will impossible. There could be no subject and object in such a consciousness, and this would nullify the fundamental condition of thought. It would obliterate all variety and activity in the field of consciousness and reduce it to a static condition, like an eternal frozen ocean. Such a view of the divine consciousness cancels consciousness and issues in pantheism.

May we go further and infer that the trinity in our human personality points to an infinitely higher trinity in God? The analogy of degrees of consciousness is not exhausted until we have followed it up to its ut-

most summit and climax. Subpersonality in animals and incomplete personality in man are an ascending series leading up to superpersonality in God. The distinctions of thought, feeling, and will and of subject, object, and their union in man may be germinal hints and buds of a complex personality in which there are distinctions that may be viewed as personal and capable of holding mutual relations of fellowship. God must be sufficient in himself apart from and independent of any created beings. What was he doing, how was he employing and enjoying himself, before that "beginning" in which he created the world and finite persons? The question startles us, and on its answer depend portentous consequences. If God is a complex personality, having in himself distinctions that form a kind of society in which mutual thought and love and activity are exercised, then God is sufficient in himself and has an eternal life of thought and love and joy, "God blessed forever." But if God has not this self-sufficient personality, then we are driven again into a pantheistic Absolute, which is the most terrible specter, as we shall later see, that agnostic philosophy has ever created. From this horror we are delivered as we find reasons, broad as the universe and deep as the human heart, for believing in a God who lives and loves in himself and can impart the same joyous life to his cre-

ated children. We thus climb and are driven up the stairway of philosophical thought to a conception of God that approaches, if it does not coincide with, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Godhead is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a higher personality that fulfills all the conditions of our logical demands.

4. Somewhat similar results have been reached by many of our profoundest thinkers. Friedrich Paulsen, in his *Introduction to Philosophy,* in describing his "idealistic pantheism," writes: "Pantheism, as we understand it, has no intention of depriving God of anything or of denying him anything but human limitations. It will not permit us to define God by the concept of personality simply because the notion is too narrow for the infinite fullness and depth of his being. Still, in order to remove the apprehension, we might call God a *suprapersonal* being, not intending thereby to define his essence, but to indicate that God's nature is above the human mind, not below it. And pantheism might add that it finds no fault with any one for calling God a personal being in this sense. In so much as the human mind is the highest and most important thing we know, we can form an idea of God only by intensifying human attributes."

In his *Appearance and Reality,* Mr. F. H. Bradley says: "The Absolute, though known, is higher, in a

sense, than our experience and knowledge; and in this connection I will ask if it has personality. At the point we have reached such a question can be dealt with rapidly. We answer it at once in the affirmative or negative according to its meaning. Since the Absolute has everything, it of course must possess personality. And if by personality we are to understand the highest form of finite spiritual development, then certainly in an eminent degree the Absolute is personal. For the higher (we may repeat) is always the more real. . . . If the term 'personal' is to bear anything like its ordinary sense, assuredly the Absolute is not personal. It is not personal, because it is personal and more. It is, in a word, superpersonal. . . . It is better to affirm personality than to call the Absolute impersonal. But neither mistake is necessary. The Absolute stands above, and not below, its internal distinctions. It does not eject them, but includes them as elements in its fullness. To speak in other language, it is not the indifference but the concrete identity of all extremes. But it is better in this connection to call it superpersonal."

And even Herbert Spencer, while persistently declaring that his "Unknowable Power" is absolutely unknowable, yet cannot keep from expressing an opinion as to its ultimate nature and makes bold to say that it is "probably psychical" and "hyperpersonal."

While these thinkers deny that God is personal according to the level and limitations of human personality, yet they affirm that the personality of God lies above the human level and is of a higher type, and this is an affirmation of immense significance. If they deny us a personal God after our human type, they believe that their "God has provided some better thing for us." Their philosophy is really moving in the direction of the triune God, though they may know it not, and their eyes may dimly catch a glimpse of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Absolute "who is over all, God blessed forever."

Our tentative construction of the personality of God thus starts with our human self as a finite image of the Infinite, a drop of dew that mirrors the mighty sun, and unfolds this analogy in its psychological and philosophical implications into the superpersonal Absolute of philosophy and the triune God of Christian faith. But here we know only in part and must ever be hemmed in by the limitations of our knowledge. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Yet we know enough to worship and serve God in faith and fellowship, and in the presence of these unspeakable mysteries to "be still and know that I am God."

There is a universe within,
The world we call the soul, the mind:
And in this world what best we find
We stammer forth, and think no sin
To call it God, and our God, and
Give heaven and earth into His hand,
And fear His power, and search His plan
Darkly, and love Him, when we can.

— *Goethe.*

VIII

OBJECTIONS TO THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

THE fact that there are objections raised to the personality of God on psychological and philosophical grounds is not surprising, for we encounter difficulties in all fields of knowledge; and any theory of any fact or event can be subjected to criticism that will seem to entangle it in embarrassment if not in impossibility. The simplest fact contains deeps that baffle us, and anything so vast and profound as the constitution of God must present problems that are infinitely beyond our power of solution. The personality of God is indeed an infinite mystery, but it is one that includes and solves all other mysteries, and we must come to a stop with mystery somewhere. We cannot explain our ultimate explanation, and at last must rest on some final fact and faith.

The objections to the personality of God can be stated and sustained with logical force and plausibility. The fact that they are held and urged by some of our greatest thinkers shows that they are not simply shallow and flimsy speculations and doubts, but have depth

and solidity of reasoning behind them. And they are not urged out of any irreligious or unworthy motive, but only in sincerity as the compulsion of truth. Nevertheless, grave as are the philosophical embarrassments which are offered to the doctrine of the personality of God, we believe that the denial of it encounters still greater difficulties and that the main weight of logical thought as well as of practical experience lies on the side of the truth of this doctrine. And the very denials of the doctrine, as we have already seen, admit a higher and not a lower constitution in God.

1. The first fundamental objection to the personality of God is the contention of agnosticism, that we cannot know the nature of ultimate reality, or of reality in itself, but can know only its phenomenal appearances. These appearances are said to be unlike the ultimate reality and act as a screen or bar to shut us off from it. The constitution of the human mind is such that its senses and categories, or intuitional principles, are interposed as a medium that perverts reality, just as a lens of stained glass not only colors all the objects seen through it but may also magnify or minimize their true size and utterly distort their true shape. This theory of the constitution of the mind was variously stated by Hume and Kant and Hamilton and Spencer, but in all its forms it conceives the mind to be an organ that

cannot give us true but only relative knowledge of objective reality. Mr. Spencer in his *Principles of Psychology* gives us a diagram of a curved lens that distorts a cube seen through it into a radically different shape, and this illustrates his view of the working of the mind in the perception of reality. The outcome of this doctrine of the relativity of knowledge is that our mind out of its own constitution forms a conception of reality that bears no resemblance to its true nature; and thus we are shut up within our mind and can never reach reality. As applied to God this theory gives us the Unknowable Power of Mr. Spencer and the Absolute of Mr. Bradley.

As to this doctrine of agnosticism we remark:

(1) In spite of his own agnostic principle Mr. Spencer proceeds to write ten volumes of *Synthetic Philosophy,* every page of which tells us something about this Unknowable Power, for he is all the way through unfolding the laws of its operations. It thus turns out that he is rich as Croesus in practical knowledge of his Unknowable Power. And Mr. Bradley, in spite of his destructive criticism of the human mind, writes his large volume on *Appearance and Reality* and is equally inconsistent.

(2) Agnosticism is equally fatal to all knowledge, including knowledge of its own principle. If the hu-

man mind is fundamentally an untrustworthy and perversive organ of knowledge, then it cannot truly know anything, not even the fact that it cannot know. Such denial of knowledge must deny its own denial and thereby cancel itself. Agnosticism literally commits suicide, and then strangely keeps on talking.

(3) There is an element of truth in agnosticism, as there is in all theories and even in all error, and it is this grain of truth in error that gives it its plausibility and vitality. The truth in agnosticism is that the human mind cannot grasp reality in its whole nature but can know only in part. Even to know a "flower in the crannied wall" "root and branch and all in all" would be to "know what God and man is." Nevertheless the mind is a true instrument of knowledge as far as its powers go. It knows its own consciousness, not through the media of senses, but by intuition or immediate awareness, and this is knowledge not of phenomena but of noumena, or reality in itself. And in and through phenomena the mind knows noumena, or ultimate reality, as far as its knowledge goes. For the appearances of things are so far the things themselves or disclose their activities and laws, and the mind goes beyond appearances into the nature of things in so far as it discerns the ideas and laws imbedded in them. Idealism holds that the mind penetrates into the very

inner nature of an object as an activity of thought and feeling and will and finds that it is a mental object or is spirit of like nature with itself. The mind is thus shown to be a trustworthy organ of knowledge and is saved from the pit of universal agnosticism.

(4) The human mind can therefore know God so far as its finite capacity can grasp or catch a glimpse of the infinite. Mr. Spencer himself declares that the existence of the Unknowable Power is the most certain fact of our knowledge — another self-contradiction in his agnosticism — and he even hazards the venture that it is "probably psychical" and "hyperpersonal" in nature. It is only going a logical step further to affirm that the mind can gain some true knowledge of the infinite, and it finds the Ultimate Reality and First Cause of all things to be Spirit and a personal God. While our knowledge of God is limited by our finite capacities and contains much symbolism, so that God is still in a measure the "agnostic God," according to the Greek inscription Paul saw on the statue of a god in Athens, yet he is also truly known to us in his nature and constitution as the Father of our spirits, in whom we live and move and have our being. The knowledge of God is indeed "too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it." The Bible is full of such agnosticism; our knowledge of God is only a child's or

infant's knowledge of its father; yet it is real knowledge that goes far enough to enable us to live with God in ever-growing fellowship.

2. A second objection to the personality of God is the allegation that personality is a limitation which is inconsistent with the infinitude of God.

(1) Personality, it is said, implies limitation in its necessary relation of the self to the not-self, and, more definitely, of subject and object. There can be no personality without self-conscious thought, and there can be no thought without a subject that thinks and an object that is thought about. Thus personality is limited in its very constitution by the not-self that must stand over against the self, and by the object that must stand over against the subject. But the absolute, it is said, by its very definition cannot permit a not-self, which would thus reduce it to subjection to relation, and the infinite cannot admit an object, which would limit it as subject. This difficulty is more verbal than real; it grows out of our definitions rather than out of reality. The absolute is not necessarily that which is released from all relations, but that which is released from all necessary relations or dependence imposed upon it from without. It may itself initiate any relations it chooses and still be absolute, for such relations are not imposed upon it so as to destroy its absolute-

ness, but it constitutes them and so remains absolute. If the absolute were denied or lacked the power of constituting relations, such inability would itself limit and thereby destroy the absoluteness of the absolute. In a similar way, the infinite is not that which has no limitations, but that which has no necessary limitations imposed upon it from without. It still has the power of assuming limitations of its own, but such limitations are still within its own power and are not real limitations to infinitude. The lack of such power would be a real limitation to the infinite.

(2) Personality is not a limitation but an additional power. The opposition of self and not-self is not a necessary relation. This relation is generally present in our human experience. Our consciousness of self, though it begins with, does not depend on, our consciousness of a not-self, but is an immediate experience. The opposition of subject and object is a necessary relation of personality, at least in our experience of personality, but this relation may be internal to the constitution of personality itself. The self is at once subject and object, and thus experiences this relation in itself. The infinite personality of God may be based on this relation and yet not pass into dependence on any external object.

Personality is the power to know and feel and act,

and this ability is not a limitation but an enormous expansion of power. The absence of such power would itself be a limitation beyond any other conceivable lack. In the human soul personality is fettered by the limitations and imperfections of finite conditions, and the struggle of the soul in its development and education and passionate ambitions is to break through and widen out these limitations. We can conceive of freedom and power of personality indefinitely higher than we have attained, and we long and strive to climb this height and reach this freedom, and at times we beat against the bars of our limitations as birds against the wires of their cage. This is the meaning and purpose of all our search for knowledge, bondage and battles, visions and victories. Now these limitations do not exist in the personality of God. He has personality in full, infinite perfection and freedom and power. What exists in us only as a tiny seed or feeble germ exists in him in the glorious flower and perfect fruit. We are but pale shadows of his substance, mere gleams of his infinite glory.

(3) This is the reasoning and conclusion of Lotze in his great chapter on The Personality of God, in his *Miscrocosmus*. The whole chapter needs to be read to feel the force of its reasoning, but a few quotations will indicate its line of thought. He says:

There arise the questions — never to be quite silenced — What are we ourselves? What is our soul? What is ourself — that obscure being, incomprehensible to ourselves, that stirs in our feelings and our passions, and never rises into complete self-consciousness? The fact that these questions can arise shows how far our personality is from being developed in us to the extent which its notion admits and requires. It can be perfect only in the Infinite Being which, in surveying all its conditions or actions, never finds any content of that which it suffers or any law of its working, the meaning and origin of which are not transparently plain to it, and capable of being explained by reference to its own nature. . . . In point of fact we have little ground for speaking of the personality of finite beings; it is an ideal, which, like all that is ideal, belongs unconditionally only to the Infinite, but like all that is good appertains to us only conditionally and imperfectly.

The three concluding sections of Lotze's chapter give its summary as follows:

Selfhood, the essence of personality, does not depend upon any opposition that either has happened or is happening of the Ego to a Non-Ego, but it consists in an immediate self-existence which constitutes the basis of the possibility of that contrast wherever it appears. Self-consciousness is the elucidation of this self-existence which is brought about by means of knowledge, and even this is by no means necessarily bound up with the distinction of the Ego from the Non-Ego which is substantially opposed to it.

In the nature of the finite mind as such is to be found the reason why the development of its personal consciousness can take place only through the influences of that cosmic whole which the finite being itself is not, that is through stimulation coming through the Non-Ego, not because it

needs the contrast with something *alien* in order to have self-existence, but because in this respect, as in every other, it does not contain in itself the conditions of its existence. We do not find this limitation in the being of the Infinite; hence for it alone is there possible a self-existence, which needs neither to be initiated nor to be continuously developed by something not itself, but which maintains itself within itself with spontaneous action that is eternal and had no beginning.

Perfect Personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this Personality but a limit and hindrance of its development.

By the same line of reasoning Professor Borden P. Bowne comes to the same conclusion in his *Theism:*

On all these accounts we regard the objections to the personality of the world-ground as resting on a very superficial psychology. So far as they are not verbal, they arise from taking the limitations of human consciousness as essential to consciousness in general. In fact, we must reverse the common speculative dogma on this point, and declare that proper personality is possible only to the Absolute. The very objections urged against the personality of the Absolute show the incompleteness of human personality. Thus it is said, truly enough, that we are conditioned by something not ourselves. The outer world is an important factor in our mental life. It controls us far more than we do it. But this is a limitation of our personality rather than its source. Our personality would be heightened rather than diminished, if we were self-determinant in this respect. Again, in our inner life we find similar limitations. We cannot always control our ideas. They often seem to be occurrences in us rather than our own doing. The past vanishes

beyond recall; and often in the present we are more passive than active. But these, also, are limitations of our personality. We would be much more truly persons if we were absolutely determinant of our states. But we have seen that all finite things have the ground of their existence, not in themselves, but in the Infinite, and they owe their peculiar nature to their mutual relations and to the plan of the whole. Hence, in the finite consciousness, there will always be a foreign element, an external compulsion, a passivity as well as activity, a dependence on something not ourselves, and a corresponding subjection. Hence in us personality will always be incomplete. The absolute knowledge and self-possession which are necessary to perfect personality can be found only in the absolute and infinite being upon whom all things depend. In his pure self-determination and perfect self-possession only do we find the conditions of complete personality; and of this our finite personality can never be more than the feeblest and faintest image.

This reasoning turns the very objections that are urged against the personality of the Absolute into arguments for such personality, and uses them as means for raising the personality of the Absolute to infinite perfection. We may call such personality superpersonal, but this name or conception does not change its fundamental character; and it obviously points to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which, as compared with human personality, is a higher and more complex and infinitely perfect constitution of the Godhead. We may even find, as we have seen before, a faint copy of such a complex constitution in the human soul, for

its threefold power of functioning at once as conscious subject, conscious object, and conscious union of the two may be taken as corresponding in a measure with the three persons of the Godhead — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The tripartite nature that is adumbrated in us may exist in the Godhead in such a complex constitution or society of persons as is symbolized in the doctrine of the Trinity.

It thus turns out that the objections to the personality of God, in spite of their initial force and philosophical prestige, when fully considered leave this doctrine more deeply rooted and solidly established than it was before. We may thank our opponents for their objections, which have rendered us a fuller confirmation of our faith.

> With me, faith means perpetual unbelief
> Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot
> Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.
> . . . . . .
> Say I — let doubt occasion still more faith!

IX

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

In forming our decision on any subject we should consider its alternatives. It is not wise to tear down the old house before we have a new house built. The old habitation may be only a hut altogether inadequate and uncomfortable, but it may be better than going out unprotected into storm and night. The consequences of a decision may react upon and modify, if not reverse, our sense, not only of its expediency, but of its fundamental truth and right. In the field of moral truth there is a subjective element that enters into and helps to constitute the belief we form. We must make our ideals come true, and "the will to believe" thus turns our faith into fact. Even so vast and objective a reality as the personality of God is not beyond the reach of this principle. It will become true for us only as we make it true. The alternatives to this view should have a proper influence in determining our attitude towards the view itself. Our moral and religious nature has its ineradicable and insuppressible rights in the matter, and it will declare its needs and cast its

vote. We should then face the alternatives of the personality of God before deciding against it.

These alternatives are many, for error is always manifold and truth is one. There is only one straight shortest line between any two points, but there is an infinite number of curved and crooked ones. There is only one true explanation of a fact, but there may be any number of erroneous ones. Of the many views that deny the personality of God the principal ones are atheism, deterministic monism, pantheism, agnosticism, and pessimism. Each of these world-views has in it some element of truth that gives it its partial justification and its vitality. It is a general fact that error is true in what it affirms and false in what it denies, and these theories illustrate this law. Atheism and pantheism are complementary half-truths, each going to one extreme and losing sight of the other. Atheism affirms the reality of the world and denies the objective reality of God, and pantheism affirms the reality of God and denies the objective reality of the world. Both are right in what they affirm, and wrong in what they deny. Deterministic monism is right in affirming the universality of law, and wrong in denying the presence of a causative personal Will in the world. Agnosticism is right in affirming the existence of an Ultimate Reality, but wrong in denying that we can know

anything of its nature. Pessimism is right in seeing the sad and tragic aspects of the world, but wrong in being blind to its bright aspects and victorious prospects. Thus each of these erroneous theories contains an important element of truth, but this is overshadowed and smothered under the overwhelming mass and weight of its error.

A thorough examination and refutation of these views will be found in special works devoted to the subject, such as Robert Flint's *Anti-Theistic Theories* and his *Agnosticism,* but in this study there is room for only a brief examination of two of them, the two that are most prevalent and that include in one form or another most of the others. These are deterministic monism and pantheism.

1. Deterministic monism holds that there is one substance which works and unfolds according to blind mechanical laws. This ultimate substance may be viewed as material in nature and then we have materialism, or as mental in nature and then we may have idealistic pantheism, or as unknowable and then we have agnosticism. The essential principle of the theory is that the system of the world is a mechanism of law which has caused all things to evolve out of a primary condition of simplicity or homogeneity into the present infinitude of differentiation. This primary condition

may be viewed as the star dust or glowing gas of a nebula, which cools and condenses into sun and planets, and the planet then in time spontaneously generates life and proceeds along the line of geological and biological evolution. The doctrine of evolution itself, when it ceases to be a mere method of operation and becomes a philosophy of cause, takes on this form of deterministic monism. Every moment, event or fact in one stage of the world's evolution springs by mechanical necessity out of the preceding stage, and thus the star dust held in its fiery bosom the secret and seeds of all civilization. Man himself is only a fine product of the system, the topmost blossom on this mystic tree, and does not differ in substance and law from the lowest and coarsest root, so that all his sense of freedom of will and responsibility of conscience is pure illusion and delusion. The whole system is a fixed finality from beginning to end, and nothing could ever have been different from what it was and is, and nothing can ever escape its foredoomed fate.

On this theory we remark:

(1) The theory provides no means of originating the system. The universe does not wear the aspect of eternity, but, on the contrary, it has in it all the marks of a beginning in time. It is a dependent reality at every point, each stage in its evolution growing out of

a preceding stage, and this process does take us back to the nebula. But the nebula itself is a finite dependent reality, and we are no nearer the origin of the system than we were before. The universe appears to be a clock running down, and somewhere, sometime, it must have had an eternal Power as its Cause that wound it up and set it agoing. Deterministic monism has no starting point and First Cause, and leaves its system suspended on nothing.

(2) The theory cannot account for the ascent of the process of evolution. The distance between the nebula and the mind of man is as great in height as it is in time; and yet the theory maintains that all that comes out in mind was originally latent in matter. But mechanical causation can produce nothing in the effect that was not in the cause, and this theory contradicts this fundamental axiom by bringing out of the magic box of evolution wonders of mind and thought that never could have been in it in the beginning.

(3) The theory violates our whole nature and sense of freedom and responsibility. It resolves these high powers of the soul into motion and force and thus degrades them to a level with the growth of grass and the blowing of the wind. This contradicts our mental and moral intuition of freedom, which is more certain than any argument science and philosophy can con-

struct against it. Of course the doctrine pulls up our whole moral and spiritual life by the roots and dooms all our highest hopes to the fate of a baseless delusion. The purely dynamic theory of the world views it as a fire, burning to an ash heap, in which spirit is only a fine flame; as a machine, running down never to go again, in which consciousness is only a cog. This view makes short work, not only with theology, but also with psychology, ethics, economics, politics, and history, by reducing them all to physics, and raises over the entire universe the dread specter of fatalism and final extinction. The only escape from this fire and ash heap is the view that sees the world as a spiritual system in which energy is will, substance is spirit, ultimate reality is personality, and the eternal God is all in all.

2. The same description and the same refutation of deterministic monism, just given, apply with little change of terms to pantheism. This doctrine is much older than deterministic monism, which is mostly the product of our modern scientific and philosophic thought. It is a very ancient doctrine and has widely pervaded, and at points deeply saturated, the world, especially the East, where in India it has run its logical course and brought forth its appropriate fruit. It is a fascinating theory as it seemingly exalts God into

the totality of existence and makes all phenomenal things but evanescent manifestations of him.

(1) Pantheism affirms the reality of one eternal substance which is forever evolving into all the temporary aspects of the world. Spinoza held that there is one infinite substance with an unknown number of attributes, of which we know two, thought and extension, the one being mind and the other matter. This unitary substance comes to consciousness in mind and extends itself spatially in matter, and thus we have the two fundamental aspects of the world we experience. The one eternal substance, however, has consciousness only in man and in any other finite minds that may exist, but is itself unconscious and impersonal. Impersonality is the deepest root of pantheism. The impersonal substance also unfolds into its temporal manifestations by necessity, and again we are caught in the coils of a fatalistic system. "The disposition which commonly governs the pantheistic imagination," says Lotze, is "the suppression of all that is finite in favor of the Infinite, the inclination to regard all that is of value to the living soul as transitory, empty, and frail in comparison of the majesty of the One, upon whose formal properties of immensity, unity, eternity, and inexhaustible fullness it concentrates all its reverence."

(2) The difficulties inherent in pantheism are clearly set forth by Dr. Borden P. Bowne in his work on *Personalism,* from which we quote as follows:

> The pantheistic view has insuperable difficulties. The problem of knowledge, we have before seen, is insoluble except as we maintain the freedom of both the finite and the infinite spirit. That all things depend on God is a necessary affirmation of thought, but that all things and thoughts and activities are divine is unintelligible in the first place, and self-destructive in the next. That God should know our thoughts and feelings and should perfectly understand and appreciate them is quite intelligible, but that our thoughts and feelings are his in any other sense is a psychological contradiction. If, however, we insist on so saying, then reason simply commits suicide. It is God who thinks and feels in our thinking and feeling, and hence it is God who blunders in our blundering and is stupid in our stupidity, and it is God who contradicts himself in the multitudinous inconsistencies of our thinking. Thus error, folly, and sin are all made divine, and reason and conscience as having authority vanish.

The outcome of this system of thought is that all the myriad aspects of the world are mere illusions, highly colored bubbles on the ocean of the infinite that for an instant flash their iridescence and then burst, or angry waves that for a moment rise and display the gleam of their white fangs, and then bubble and wave sink back into the depths of oblivion. Pantheism is as fatal to the reality of our human personality as it is to that of the infinite substance, for it reduces it

to one of the illusions of the world. It is equally fatal to all free will and responsibility, worthy character and conduct, for these, too, are determined as certainly as the wind and waves. In such a system "everything is God but God himself."

(3) The practical consequence of this doctrine is to deaden and destroy the sense of freedom and responsibility, relax the spirit into the flesh, drown virtue in a sea of immorality, and sink religion itself in sensuality, as is seen in India. It also lowers and destroys the sense of the worth and blessedness of life and turns it into bondage and bitterness, a hereditary and awful curse which is to be thrown off by any means, however painful and self-sacrificing, in order that the burdened soul may escape into oblivion and extinction.

(4) The God of pantheism once more confronts us as a dread specter which paralyzes life with hopelessness and despair. For it is "an immense solitary specter — it hath no shape, it hath no sound, it hath no time, it hath no place. It is, it will be, it is never more nor less, nor sad nor glad. It is nothing — and the sands fall down in the hour glass, and the hands sweep around the dial, and men alone live and strive and hate and love and know it." It was of such a world that Jean Paul Richter dreamed in his Dream of a World without God:

I dreamed I was in a churchyard at midnight. Overhead I heard the thunder of distant avalanches and beneath my feet the first footfalls of a boundless earthquake. Lightning gleamed athwart the church windows and the lead and iron frames melted and rolled down. Christ appeared and all the dead cried out, "Is there no God?" And Christ answered, "There is none. I have traversed the worlds, I have risen to the suns, with the milky ways I have passed athwart the great waste spaces of the sky: there is no God. And I descended to where the very shadow cast by Being dies out and ends, and I gazed out into the gulf beyond and cried, 'Father, where art thou?' But answer came none, save the eternal storm which rages on. We are orphans all, both I and you. We have no Father." Then the universe sank and became a mine dug in the face of the black eternal night besprent with thousand suns. And Christ cried, "Oh, mad unreasoning Chance; Knowest thou — thou knowest not — where thou dost march, hurricane-winged, amid the whirling snow of stars, extinguishing sun after sun on thy onward way, and when the sparkling dew of constellations ceases to gleam, as thou dost pass by? How every soul in this great corpse-trench of a universe is utterly alone?" And I fell down and peered into the shining mass of worlds, and beheld the coils of the great Serpent of eternity twined about those worlds; these mighty coils began to writhe and then again they tightened and contracted, folding around the universe twice as closely as before; they wound about all nature in thousand folds, and crashed the worlds together. And all grew narrow and dark and terrible. And then a great immeasurable bell began to swing and toll the last hour of time and shatter the fabric of the universe, when my sleep broke up and I awoke. And my soul wept for joy that I could still worship God — my gladness and my weeping and my faith, these were my prayer.

In such a world there is no room for true life and love, faith and hope, for all these are the strangled children of our illusion and delusion. This fatalistic impersonality of pantheism is its own deepest and surest condemnation. Our hearts, in which eternity hath been set, cry out against it as fatherless and motherless children cry in the night. Our deepest constitution and our most urgent needs must have their appropriate satisfaction, and we refuse to join in Matthew Arnold's cry of despair which was suggested to him by the mournful music of the waves on Dover Beach, and which expresses the practical consequences and profound pessimism of all these alternatives to the personality of God:

> For the world, which seems
> To lie before us like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

X

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD IN THE LIGHT OF OUR MODERN WORLD

All the great problems of religion, however they are rooted in the divine and eternal, are also affected by the special conditions of each passing age. They grow up out of its environment and experience and reflect its light, and thus present aspects that vary with the changing science and philosophy and social conditions of the time. The doctrine of the personality of God is peculiarly subject and sensitive to such changes and is continually readjusting itself to their demands.

1. In the Light of Science. Science has wrought Copernican revolutions and continental and climatic changes in our modern world, shifting its center and lifting or depressing its continents and mountain ranges and thus producing changes of climate that have caused some forms of thought to grow into bloom and fruitage and others to wither and become obsolete or extinct. It has given life and power to some religious doctrines and left others embedded as fossils in the mental strata of our modern world. How has the

personality of God been affected by these changes? There are three scientific doctrines that specially bear upon this problem.

(1) The first of these is the vastness of the universe. The former conceptions of the expanse of the heavens, great as they were, have been enormously extended by the revlations of our modern instruments. The microscope, telescope, and spectroscope are three magic machines which are in effect immense eyes that enable us to peer into the world of matter in both directions, the microscope opening up vistas into the infinitesimally small, the telescope into the unspeakably distant and great, and the spectroscope, more marvelous still, reports the chemical composition, motion, direction and speed of distant stars and nebulæ. These enormous eyes have disclosed a universe which is an inconceivably vast whirling snow of stars of such sizes, distances and speeds as bewilder and appall us. There are huge solar monsters, such as Sirius and Rigel, which in size and splendor literally throw our sun into the shade. Mighty Canopus, as far as known the largest star in the heavens, next to Sirius in brightness and twelve times as distant, is more than two and a half millions of times larger than our sun, so that the sun could be dropped into one of its spots or yawning chasms as a pebble is dropped into a well. The light-

year, which is the distance traveled in a year by a ray of light moving at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, is the yardstick with which the astronomer measures the distances of the heavenly bodies, and some stars are thousands of such light-years away. There are also star clusters and spiral nebulæ which are thought to be universes outside of our galaxy, and these are conceived to be hundreds of thousands of light-years distant.

The first effect of such conceptions of the heavens is to dwarf our earth into a mere mote floating in this vast sea of splendor and then still farther to dwarf man into this "fretful midget," the human race itself being a mere "trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million suns." And the second effect is to seem to overtop God and crowd him out and crush him under the immeasurable weight of this blazing mass of suns. Can the personality of God stand up under this intolerable burden?

The case, however, is not so alarming as it seems, for the first appearance of things is often deceptive, and the difficulty rapidly dissolves under reflection. On any theory of philosophy matter cannot overtop and crush mind, whatever its mass and might. Man himself thinks the universe, and thereby rises above it and puts it under his feet. However vast he dis-

covers it to be, it is his own mind that perceives and reconstructs its star-fretted dome, he sets it all up in his own brain, and thereby subordinates it to himself. The greatest star is still at the little end of the telescope, the star that is looking, not the star that is being looked at.

But, on the idealistic conception of the world, mind is the only kind of reality and the universe is a spiritual system that has its origin and abiding seat in an infinite consciousness. On this view the physical universe is the thought and action, the eternal employment and enjoyment of God, and his personality, so far from being lost in the vastness of the heavens, is reflected from this shining mirror, and the universe is the sublime appeal of Spirit to spirit. The vaster is the creation the greater is the creative God. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him and the constellations are but the dew on the fringe of his garment. "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of him!"

(2) Another scientific doctrine bearing on the personality of God is the universality of law. Science is the search for order and harmony and final unity, and it finds these as it extends the reign of law. Nature at first sight presents the appearance of confusion and chaos, and men have slowly threaded their way through

its jungle and cleared it up into law and order. The physical world has been widely brought under this principle, and now it is believed, though this belief is an immense exercise of faith, that law reigns down to the last atom and electrical vibration of the universe. The same principle has been extended to the mental and moral and spiritual world, and human souls are found to be not capricious beings forming a chaotic social order, but are law-saturated organisms cohering in an orderly system. It is true that some spiritual laws may be violated in ways in which physical and metaphysical laws are not violable, but all spiritual laws hold as obligations and are the necessary conditions of moral and spiritual welfare.

This extension of the reign of law, until it has become coterminous with the whole field of being, at first seems to reduce personality to mechanism and thereby to imprison and destroy its essential nature of moral freedom and responsibility. As law was extended over each additional area it seemed that both man and God, considered as free beings, were driven out of that field and were shut up in a narrower sphere in which to act and exist, and that finally they were crowded out of the law-ruled universe altogether. God, according to this view, has thus become imprisoned in his own world, and his personality has been

rendered impotent and has been destroyed. Undoubtedly the reign of law has made it more difficult for the modern mind to believe in either the freedom of man or the personality of God.

But again the difficulty is greatest at first view, and abates and disappears under reflection. In the case of man he clearly exercises his conscious freedom in a world of physical laws. He does not and cannot violate them, but he combines and turns them to his own ends, and this is what he is doing in all his mastery of nature. Physical energies have increasingly become his nimble servants, so that he hitches his wagon to the great golden driving wheel of the sun and rides in ease and comfort. He is wholly environed in these physical energies, and yet they no more fetter and impede him than does his own skin which constantly adapts itself without friction to all his activities and aids him in them.

Man is not imprisoned in nature, but is its master and lord. The universe with all its laws is his servant, and all its power bows to his personality at every step. Man is a supernatural being and moves through nature in the full possession and exercise of his personality and freedom. Laws are the means of liberty, the grooves and guides in which liberty moves with smoothness in speed and safety. The steel track does

not limit the liberty of the locomotive but gives it all the liberty it has. Law and liberty are not antagonistic but are mutually complementary and harmonious. It is because man lives in a world of law that he can have liberty and life.

Lotze wrote his monumental work, *Microcosmus*, to show "how absolutely universal is the extent and at the same time how completely subordinate the significance, of the mission which mechanism has to fulfill in the structure of the world." And Mr. A. J. Balfour, in his Gifford Lectures on *Theism and Humanism*, speaking of the difficulties in connection with natural law and prayer, says: "These difficulties are difficulties of theory, not of practice. They never disturb the ordinary man — nor the extraordinary man in his ordinary moments. Human intercourse is not embarrassed by the second, nor simple piety by the first. And perhaps the enlightened lounger, requesting a club waiter to shut the window, brushes aside, or ignores, as many philosophical puzzles as a mother passionately praying for the safety of her child."

God, then, moves through his universe and its laws are not weights but wings to his freedom and personality; and equally the inviolable laws of his character are an expression and means of his liberty and life. Personality finds its proper expression, not in caprice,

but in plan and purpose; and thus the reign of law in the universe, instead of being an objection to the personality of God, is an argument in its favor.

(3) The third scientific doctrine that bears upon our problem is the theory of evolution. This now dominates the whole field of thought and is applied to physical nature from the ether to atoms and molecules, and from nebulæ to suns and systems, and in the world of life from single-celled organisms up to man. Its central principle is that of genetic connection and continuity as the simpler forms unfold into the more complex, and it also includes a reversal of the process in devolution. This central principle is universally accepted in the scientific world, though the mechanism or factors of the process are still an unsolved problem. Darwin's theory of natural selection is now generally held to be an insufficient account of evolution and efforts are being made to find the determining cause of the process in the secret of heredity.

So revolutionary and dominant an idea was bound to be attended with mistaken views in its interpretation and application, and at first sight it seemed to many to be destructive of all ideas of creation and providence and of human immortality and divine personality. But continued reflection has cleared up such views and showed that the theory leaves all these prob-

lems unaffected in their essential nature, though throwing new light upon them. The fundamental fact as to evolution is that it is a method and not a cause. It only shows how causes work, but does not account for the causes themselves. It cannot bring out explicitly in the result anything that was not either implicit in the beginning or was put into the course of the process. If any increment comes out in the product that was not put into the process, such an increment would be an event or effect without a cause and this would contradict one of the most fundamental of our axiomatic intuitions. That every event has a cause is a necessary belief that lies at the basis of all our thought and action and applies to the whole creation from the beginning to the end.

Evolution, then, is only a method and is a description of the way all causes work, back and up to the First Cause, or God. It is the divine program of creation, written broadly over the first chapter of Genesis and expressed in all the processes of the world. Being the plan and program of God, it does not in the least impair his freedom and hamper his presence and purpose and providence in the world. So far from destroying or crippling his personality, it gives full and free expression to it. All that evolves out of the creation was by him involved in it, either at the beginning or during the

course of the process, so that the creation grows out of him as the mechanism out of the mechanician or as the flower out of the seed or the body out of the spirit.

God in his personality still stands central and sovereign in his universe, and all this infinite snowstorm of stars came out of him as snowflakes come out of the invisible air, or as our evolving plans and purposes, thoughts and deeds come out of us. The production of new species of plants and animals by evolution no more shuts God out of creation than does the production of individual plants and animals by growth exclude him from this process. Any new increment that emerges in the course of evolution draws its heredity from God, as when "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The theist, holding to the personality of God as his central principle, has no difficulty in holding in fullest harmony with it the modern doctrine of evolution, and such acceptance on the part of theistic thinkers is practically universal and unquestioned.

Not only does evolution not stand in the way of the personality of God, but, as in the case of the vastness of the universe and the reign of law, it turns out to be an argument in its favor. For evolution ever leads up to higher forms and finally culminates in personality

in man, and this fact points on up to personality in the Cause of man. Personality in man is only a pale copy of a perfect Pattern, a gleam of light that shoots from the central Splendor of the universe, and its perfection and source is the personality of God.

2. In the Light of Philosophy. Philosophy, which seeks to penetrate behind the proximate causes of science to final causes and ultimate reality, cuts deeper into the substance of the world and the tissues of the soul than science, and therefore bears more intimately and vitally upon the problem of the personality of God. Recent renewed interest in philosophy has been specially concerned with our subject, for the personality of God is the central supreme question that determines the solution of all vital human questions and cosmic problems.

(1) The *Creative Evolution* of Bergson. The French philosopher Bergson has arisen on our horizon as a star of sparkling brilliance, though probably not of the first magnitude. He has invested his speculations in the vivacity and charm of French thought and style, and they have attained a popular currency that surpasses their popular intelligibility.

Bergson presents us with the picture of a growing universe which consists of a stream of life flowing through resistant matter and breaking into all its

myriad forms. This stream of life, or *élan vital,* is described as consciousness, but not "the narrowed consciousness that functions in us"; it is "rather super-consciousness." Matter is the refractory element or realm of mechanical necessity which this life-force seeks "to penetrate with contingency." For a central principle in Bergson's system is the creative freedom of his life-force which is always initiating new forms of thought and action which are unforeseeable. Past existence is constantly summed up and contained within present existence, so that the present always conserves the whole of the past and carries it along with it; and then it gives birth to its own free actions by which life "seizes upon matter . . . and strives to introduce into it the largest amount of indetermination and liberty." The freedom that is so strongly emphasized contains "properly speaking neither project nor plan," and is so released from reasoned motives and ends that it looks like blind impulse or irrational caprice.

This invites and justifies the criticism by Mr. Balfour, found in *The Hibbert Journal* for October, 1911, in which he says: "Creation, freedom, will — these doubtless are great things; but we cannot lastingly admire them unless we know their drift. We cannot, I submit, rest satisfied with what differs so little from

the haphazard; joy is no fitting consequence of efforts which are so nearly aimless. If values are to be taken into account, it is surely better to invoke God with a purpose than a supra-consciousness with none."

At this point Bergson leaves us in the dark as to what is behind his "life" and "matter" and whence they come. He might be a theist or an agnostic as to ultimate reality, and he has even been accused of "atheistic monism." However, Professor Pringle-Pattison, in his recent work on *The Idea of God,* is able to quote a letter written in 1912 by Bergson in which he says that the arguments of his books should leave us with "a clear idea of a free and creating God, producing matter and life at once, whose creative effort is continued, in a vital direction, by the evolution of species and the construction of human personalities." He is further quoted as having said, in his Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh in 1914, that he did "not profess to have a metaphysical system," and "he appeared prepared to regard as the rationale of a phenomenal process the idea of a Creator, the end of whose action was the creation of creators." It would thus appear that Bergson's views of ultimate reality are undergoing evolution along with his growing universe, and more light may be expected from this interesting but inconclusive thinker.

(2) The *Pluralistic Universe* of William James. Mr. James, having done notable and enduring work in psychology, in his later years set sail upon the sea of metaphysics, but can hardly be said to have discovered any new land or even to have found a solid shore on which to set his foot. His speculations have the penetrating insight and unconventional freshness of thought and style that characterize all his work, but they give the impression that he had not thought his way through. This unfinishedness, however, is part of his pragmatic, anti-intellectualist system, and he would suspect and repudiate any thinking, even his own, if it swept a full circle and found a complete solution of a world problem.

James is enamored of Bergson and finds his book "like the breath of the morning and the song of birds. It tells us of reality itself, instead of merely reiterating what dusty-minded professors have written about what other previous professors have thought. Nothing in Bergson is shop-worn or at second hand." James follows Bergson, but has his own point of view. Both of these thinkers are greatly opposed to "a block-universe," or "closed system," or monism, but find all things in a state of free flux, an unfinished and growing world. "What really exists is not things but things in the making." James's universe is an aggre-

gate. He will not have an organic unity, but strings out his world in a row, or pitches it together as a heap. "Pluralism means only that the sundry parts of reality may be externally related. Everything you can think of, however vast or inclusive, has on the pluralistic view a genuinely 'external' environment of some sort or amount. Things are 'with' one another in many ways, but nothing includes anything, or dominates over everything. The word 'and' trails along after every sentence. . . . The pluralistic world is thus more like a federal republic than like an empire or a kingdom. However much may be collected, however much may report itself as present at any effective center of consciousness or action, something else is self-governed and absent and unreduced to unity."

As to the ultimate nature of his pluralistic universe, Mr. James reaches super-human intelligence and a finite God. "The absolute," he says, "is not the impossible being I once thought it. Mental facts do function both singly and together, at once, and we finite minds may simultaneously be co-conscious with one another in a super-human intelligence. . . . The outlines of the super-human intelligence thus made probable must remain, however, very vague, and the number of functionally distinct 'selves' it comports and carries has to be left entirely problematic. It may

be polytheistically or it may be monotheistically conceived of. . . . The line of least resistance, then, as it seems to me, both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the super-human consciousness, the notion that it is all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once. . . . Yet because God is not the absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of the other smaller parts,— as similar to our functions consequently."

God is thus one in the midst of the many and is of like powers and passions with them, differing only in degree and not in kind. Mr. James has strong sympathy with religion and thinks that philosophy must meet its practical demands; and he is so hopeful as to believe that his empirical philosophy contains the vital breath of a religious revival; let it "once become associated with religion, . . . and I believe that a new era of religion as well as of philosophy will be ready to begin."

(3) The *God the Invisible King* of H. G. Wells. Mr. H. G. Wells, scientific romancer, novelist, socialist, and agnostic, has also assumed the rôle of a philosopher and theologian. Though his books in this field

show his lack of training in and acquaintance with this region of thought, yet they display the interesting workings of a remarkably inventive and fertile mind. In his first war novel, entitled *Mr. Britling Sees It Through,* he introduced God in quite orthodox fashion and almost led his readers to believe that he had been converted to belief in a theistic God, if not in Christianity. His later book, however, entitled *God the Invisible King,* dispelled this impression and set forth his views in unmistakable terms.

Mr. Wells is singularly frank. In the first two sentences of his Preface he says: "This book sets out as forcibly and exactly as possible the religious belief of the writer. That belief is not orthodox Christianity; it is not, indeed, Christianity at all; its core nevertheless is a profound belief in a personal and intimate God." A book that begins with such expression of "profound belief in a personal and intimate God," and ends with the declaration, "It is the Kingdom of God at hand," promises much to the religious soul, but we fear that the contents of the book, despite its eloquence and hopeful as it is from some points of view, will yet prove a disappointment to many readers.

Notwithstanding this belief in a personal and intimate God, the book at once plants agnosticism of the densest and darkest kind behind the universe. "At

the back of all known things," we read, "there is an impenetrable curtain; the ultimate existence is a Veiled Being, which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill. Of that Being, whether it is simple or complex or divine, we know nothing; to us it is no more than the limit of understanding, the unknown beyond." Like Herbert Spencer, to whom Frederic Harrison said, "You know too much about your Unknowable," Mr. Wells has peeped behind the Veil and reports to us much about his Veiled Being, which seems to correspond closely with Spencer's Unknowable Power.

Out of this abyss behind or at the bottom of the universe pours a flood of Life, which corresponds with Bergson's *élan vital*. "And coming out of this veiled being, proceeding out of it in a manner altogether inconceivable, is another lesser being, an impulse thrusting through matter and clothing itself in continually changing material forms, the maker of our world, Life, the Will to Be. It comes out of the inscrutable being as a wave comes rolling to us from beyond the horizon. It is as it were a great wave rushing through matter and possessed by a spirit. It is a breeding, fighting thing; it pants through the jungle track as a tiger and lifts itself towards heaven as a tree; it is a rabbit bolting for its life and the dove calling its mate;

it crawls, it flies, it dives, it lusts and devours, it pursues and eats itself in order to live still more eagerly and hastily; it is every living thing, of it are our passions and desires and fears."

Out of Life comes God, and again we are introduced to a finite growing God, but this time to one incarnated in humanity. We are told much about this God, such as that he is "courage," "youth," and "love." But the essential thing is the nature of God as contrasted with orthodox views of the divine being. "Modern religion," says Mr. Wells — and this is the very heart of his creed —" declares that though he does not exist in matter or space, he exists in time just as a current of thought may do; that he changes and becomes more even as a man's purpose gathers itself together; that somewhere in the dawning of mankind he had a beginning, an awakening, and that as mankind grows he grows. With our eyes he looks out upon the universe he invades; with our hands, he lays hands upon it. All our truth, all our intentions and achievements, he gathers to himself. He is the undying human memory, the increasing human will." Mr. Wells denies that this God is only the sum of humanity, but he is constantly using language that implies this and will admit of no other clear meaning. "It comes as no great shock," he says again, "to those who have

grasped the full implications of the statement that God is Finite, to hear it asserted that the first purpose of God is the attainment of clear knowledge, of knowledge as a means to more knowledge, and of knowledge as a means to power. For that he must use human eyes and hands and brains."

"The Kingdom of God" fills a large space in Mr. Wells's book and much is said about it that is true and good and beautiful. Mr. Wells is as orthodox and insistent as Paul in turning all life into religion and bidding us, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Provision or at least allowance is made for organized religion: "There is no reason why one should not organize or join associations for the criticism of religious ideas," and "many people feel the need of prayer," though "the writer does not understand this desire or need for collective prayer very well." As to immortality, Mr. Wells thinks it is not "one of the essentials of religion," but he says he has "no appetite for a separate immortality. God is my immortality; what, of me, is identified with God, is God; what is not me is of no more permanent value than the snows of yester-year." As Mr. James was enthusiastic about the future of his religion, so is Mr. Wells. "I foresee," he says, "a wave of religious revival and religious

clarification," and declares: "In quite a little while the whole world may be alive with this renascent faith." [1]

(4) The Profound Religiousness of Agnostic Thinkers. Bergson, James, and Wells are three striking figures in the present field of philosophy. They are free lances in philosophical discussion and have small respect for the traditional rules of the game. No views or methods are sacrosanct to them. The orthodox philosopher receives as irreverent and rough treatment at their hands as the orthodox theologian. It was a keen thrust of his sharp blade that James gave them when he spoke of philosophers as "merely reiterating what dusty-minded professors have written about what other previous professors have thought." It might be retorted that he and some of his compeers would come off better in this field if they did know

[1] Inventors of new religions frequently are obsessed with the idea that their little systems will sweep the whole world like wildfire and throw all other religions into the shade. Thus Auguste Comte, whose Positive Religion "seems to me," says Professor Flint, "a most monstrous combination of fetichism, skepticism, and catholicism, of sense and folly, of science and sentimental drivel," "yet believed that his ludicrous religion of humanity would be established throughout the West during the present (nineteenth) century; in seven years afterwards over the monotheistic East; and in thirteen years more, by the conversion and regeneration of all the polytheistic and fetichist peoples, over the whole earth." See his *Philosophy of History in France*, p. 607, and his *Socialism*, p. 267.

and respect the rules of the game, which, like all rules, are the product of long experience; but they are incorrigible and impervious to any such lance thrust.

The contributions of these thinkers to philosophy are fresh and pertinent and important. As regards our subject they are all three witnesses to the personality of God. They fall short of historic orthodoxy at this point, but they see that the logic of reality runs in this direction. They judge that the universe shows its essential nature at the top, in the blossom and fruit rather than in the root, and that the final expression of reality is some form and degree of personality. As against blind materialism and impersonal pantheism their witness has weight. And they are profoundly and practically religious and tremendously emphasize and apply the truth that "in him we live and move and have our being." Mr. Wells at times writes as though, like Spinoza, he were "a God-intoxicated man." Mr. James comes out of his philosophical discussion of religion with these two results: "1. An uneasiness; and 2. Its solution." The "uneasiness" being "a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand," and the "solution" being "a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers." These are broadly orthodox results, and yet Mr. James studiously

avoids the orthodox terms "sin" and "salvation," which are the equivalent of his "uneasiness" and "solution," possibly because he did not want it to be thought that he had been converted and joined the church.

In reading these thinkers we often feel that the orthodoxy that has been politely bowed out or unceremoniously thrust out through the front door has been quietly taken in again, under another name, through the back door. Psychologists and philosophers are "incorrigibly religious," and even some modern agnostics would be classed by the Apostle Paul among the Athenian agnostics whom he addressed as "very religious."

John Stuart Mill was a striking illustration of this fact. He was regarded as a leader among the agnostics of his day, but he left his posthumous *Essays on Religion* which fell and exploded as a bomb in the camp of his followers. In these essays he leaned strongly towards theism and human immortality, saying: "It appears to me that the indulgence of hope with regard to the government of the universe and the destiny of man after death, while we recognize as a clear truth that we have no ground for more than a hope, is legitimate and philosophically defensible"; and going so far as to say concerning Christ that "re-

ligion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." When these *Essays* came out there was no small amount of consternation in certain quarters. "Mr. Leslie Stephen," writes Wilfred Ward in his essay on John Stuart Mill, in his *Men and Matters,* "was reported to have paced the room in indignation which could not be contained, while his wife yet further angered him by the poor consolation of 'I told you so. I always said John Mill was orthodox.'" Huxley, also, archagnostic as he was and inventor of the word, could not keep the name of God off his tombstone, where together with a wistful hope of immortality it appears in an inscription written by his wife and approved of by himself. And Spencer himself, the philosopher of agnosticism, declared of religion that "the matter is one which concerns each and all of us more than any other matter whatever." He even went so far as to say that his "Unknowable Power" is "probably psychical" and "probably hyperpersonal," thus approaching the idea of a spiritual Absolute and a personal God. Truly these agnostic thinkers are

"very religious," and may be "not far from the kingdom of God."

(5) The Doctrine of a Finite and Growing God. These results of these thinkers are steps in the right direction and are hopeful philosophical and religious signs of the times. But their doctrine of a finite and growing God gives us pause. This doctrine, of course, is not new or peculiar to them but is as old as Oriental dualism and Plato's theodicy. It is resurgent in much of our modern philosophy. Hume took refuge in it, and John Stuart Mill gave powerful expression to it as the only explanation of this world torn asunder by the struggle between good and evil. These thinkers say that this disjointed world proves that God cannot be omnipotent but must be limited in knowledge and power, or else he is not good.

But, desperate as is the situation and intolerable as it sometimes seems, the proposed solution is more intolerable still. All our thinking and experience, science and philosophy, theology and religious demands, drive us in spite of these appearances back and up to unity as the source of all the streams of the universe. Two Gods are intolerable to us because they would not tolerate each other. They would both necessarily be finite and dependent and would thereby drive us back to some deeper and final reality, which would be the

one and only true God. Spencer and Wells recognize this logic in their Unknowable Power and Veiled Being.

One omnipotent eternal God is an infinite mystery, but it is a mystery that swallows up and digests and explains all other mysteries. A God that had his birth in the dawn of humanity will never satisfy humanity. A "pluralistic universe" is a contradiction in its very terms. Mr. James has a veritable obsession against thin "intellectualism" as a world-builder, but his own "pluralistic universe" is itself an intellectual construction, the product of his pragmatic logic, and is itself undermined and overthrown by a deeper logic of mind and heart. We accept the testimony of these thinkers to the personal and spiritual elements in the universe, yet cannot stop at their half-way station of a finite God, but must go on towards the logical limit and fulfillment of their own principles in the one infinite, eternal, personal God, Creator of the world and Father of our spirits.

(6) The Doctrine of a Creative, Struggling, and Suffering God. The doctrine of a finite and growing God is aimed at an error that needs to be repudiated and contains a truth that should be brought out. The error is that of an absentee God who at some remote period in the past created the world and set it agoing,

and then left it to itself, something after the manner in which an engineer makes and starts an engine which then goes of itself with only an occasional interference on his part. It is needless to say that this deistic conception has wholly passed out of our philosophic and religious thought and has been superseded by the doctrine of the divine immanence.

God is immanent in the world in continuous creation. It is true that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but this statement need refer only to the heavens of which our solar system and earth are a part. Other universes appear to be in process of creation in the spiral nebulæ whose enormous arms, studded with stars, may be condensing into other galaxies like our own. But, however this may be, our own universe is still on the anvil of creation in the mighty workshop of God in which we see suns flying off like sparks of fire. Our solar system is undergoing constant changes, and our earth is still in the factory and is being hammered and carved into shape and use. God is carrying on the work of creation in every star and planet and root and leaf as certainly and intimately as he ever did and is immanent in every atom and vibration. "My Father worketh hitherto," said Jesus, meaning that God is ever at work.

But is God present and active and struggling and suffering in our human world as it slowly and painfully fights its way up from the slime of savagery and the ethics of the jungle to the heights of our moral and spiritual civilization? Or is he only a spectator of the scene, sitting upon his throne in ease and splendor, while his human children are involved in this awful strife and carnage? This is the point that pinches and pains modern thought. At this point, also, there has been a climatic change in our modern views. Ancient thought and mediæval art represented God as resting, the Greek and Roman gods reveled in eternal dissipation, and the Italian painters picture God as reclining on a luxurious throne or floating in gorgeous clouds. The impression has not yet been wholly eliminated from our minds that God has nothing to do. It is pleasant to think of him as an eternal idler always having a good time. Labor is a disagreeable thought to us and seems a degradation to God. But the Bible boldly represents God as a laborer, and this is an infinitely higher and nobler view of him than that of pagan thought and mediæval art.

The Scriptural doctrine of providence puts God right down in the midst of our human world, appointing unto us the bounds of our habitation and numbering the very hairs of our heads. And the doctrine of re-

demption puts the Son of God under the burden of all the world's wounds and woes where he is struggling and suffering with us to overcome it as one who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," and is "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." In all our affliction he is afflicted, and while we "work out our salvation," he works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Christ is the Captain of our salvation, no dress-parade officer but a soldier down in the ranks and in the trench, bearing the brunt of the fight.

The notion of an inactive and impassive God is gone. He toils with the toiler, weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with them that rejoice. He is energizing in all the forces of the world that are struggling up through visions of better things to victory. He is in the spirit of widening good will that is drawing all men into a new sense of unity and brotherhood and preparing the way for the Republic of God on earth. God is indeed struggling and suffering with us that he may help bear our infirmities, overcome our enemies, and bring many sons to glory.

If it be asked, Why does not God in his omnipotence cut the struggle short and bring instant victory? the answer must be that moral results cannot be effected by mere power, however great, but can be achieved only

by moral means and processes. Truth and persuasion, sympathy and love, are the only proper means to this end. God having endowed us with personality must respect our moral free agency and deal with us as persons; and he can win us only as he struggles and suffers with us.

And if it be said, again, that omnipotence cannot struggle as it must attain its ends at an instant effortless stroke and that any language implying divine endeavor must be illusory, the answer is that omnipotence can do only possible things and that the fact that divine Personality cannot invade and annul human personality is no limitation upon the divine omnipotence. God is limited in his omnipotence, not by any lack of power on his part, but by the lack of capacity on our part; and this is the solution of the problem that embarrassed so sincere a seeker after religious truth as John Stuart Mill and forced him into the belief in a finite God. God is helping us and we are helping God, and this enables us, in the language of Mill, to cherish "the feeling of helping God," "inasmuch as a battle is constantly going on, in which the humblest human creature is not incapable of taking some part, between the powers of good and those of evil, and in which every even the smallest help to the right side has its value in promoting the very slow and often almost insensible prog-

ress by which good is gradually gaining ground on evil, yet gaining it so visibly at considerable intervals as to promise the very distant but not uncertain final victory of Good."

The idea of a God, then, who stands aloof from the world, his work of creation done and his part in human affairs involving him in none of our conflict and sufferings, has been outgrown in both religion and philosophy. "God is a very present help in trouble" is an assurance that is the very heart of the Bible, and the same principle emerges in our philosophic thought. "In him we live and move and have our being," and "he is not far from each one of us," for his "word is nigh thee and in thine heart."

(7) This leads us into the deep problem in religion and philosophy of the relation of the divine transcendence and the divine immanence, and it may be briefly referred to in this connection. The relation of the One to the many, of the Infinite to the finite, is a fundamental problem of philosophy that has exercised the greatest thinkers in all ages. The tendency of human thought is to relapse into the one or the other of these extremes. When all things merge into the divine transcendence we have the Absolute of pantheism; then all tracks lead into the lion's den and none comes out: and when the One breaks up into and disappears in the

many, we have a pluralistic universe with no center and throne of unity, a mere collocation of things, which is practical atheism. Either of these views is intolerable to our thought, and we must find some mode of combining them into unity.

In the idealistic conception of the world, the total universe, excluding finite spirits, is a spiritual system which is the life of God, his eternal employment and enjoyment. It is therefore immanent in him, somewhat as our thoughts and feelings and volitions are immanent in our consciousness and constitute our life; and yet he is also transcendent over it, as our consciousness controls our inner life. Finite spirits are personalities that are the offspring of God and have their own internal life of responsible thought and action. They are in God and God is in them, so that both they and he have their own life. Each soul is intuitively and ineradicably conscious and certain of its own freedom and personality, which cannot be erased or overriden by any doctrine of pantheistic determinism, and to deny which is to degrade the soul into a mere thing and cancel all its worth. And yet God also includes all human souls and wills in his own plan and life.

"There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the

Almighty giveth them understanding." The prophet and poet and man of genius whose lofty and sensitive souls are quick to catch heaven's light are specially open to divine influences, but the same light "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The infinite Spirit of God is ever endeavoring to penetrate and fill the human spirit, to free it from error and evil, to purify and deepen and ennoble it, and thus to develop it into larger and richer life. And yet through all these processes the Infinite respects the limitations and freedom and responsibility of the finite. The whole organism of humanity is environed and saturated with the Spirit of God, and under this divine immanence humanity develops and advances into fuller and nobler life. God is in all creatures, and all creatures are in God. God and his world are reciprocally immanent throughout and constitute the total sum of being. This mutual indwelling and interworking of the human and divine eludes our power to trace its boundaries and operations, but it is a fundamental fact in our religious and philosophical conceptions of the personality of God and in our religious experience.

> Draw if thou canst the mystic line
> Severing rightly His from thine,
> Which is human, which Divine.
>
> — *Emerson.*

3. In the Light of the Great War. The great war has convulsed the world to its core, crumpling up the whole crust of its civilization, apparently engulfing all things, even the most solid realities and precious gains and faiths and hopes of humanity, in its fiery crater, and bringing up from the great deeps of its subconscious life elemental instincts and passions, as submarine upheavals bring to the surface strange monsters from the bottom of the sea. Though it has collapsed, yet for a long time we shall live amidst its wreckage and grapple with its problems. It is a testing time, when all things human and divine are being tried as by fire, and all hay, wood and stubble will be burned to ashes and only pure gold will survive. How does the doctrine of the personality of God stand this trial?

(1) There is really nothing new in this crisis. War is as old as the race, and a thousand times has it ripped up the earth and saturated it with blood. Time and again has civilization been thrown into its molten melting pot and fused into its primal elements. It is true that this war has been the most gigantic and appalling in all the history of the world, but its magnitude involves no new principle. Other wars in their day seemed as destructive of the most precious possessions of the world. When the Babylonians fell

with their furious brute power upon the Jews and destroyed Jerusalem and wiped out for the time being all their religious hopes, it was as dark an hour morally and spiritually for the world as it has ever seen. When the Roman Empire fell and broke to pieces under the invasions and assaults of the northern barbarians the Dark Ages settled down upon devastated and chaotic Europe. In a later century it seemed that Europe was again being trampled to pieces under the heavy boots of Napoleon, and there were dark days for us in our Revolutionary War and in our Civil War. Every war is a terrible tragedy and may seem to be the end of all things to those who are in the midst of it.

Yet faith in God as a personal Ruler has survived all these wars and all the catastrophes of human history. If war could kill faith it would have been dead long ago. The human heart has reasons for its faith that are deeper than all earthly vicissitudes and survive through all the storms and earthquakes of time. The great war has surpassed all others in its appalling magnitude and destruction, but it has introduced no new difficulty to our faith in the personality of God, and the human heart will not fail in its faith or fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

(2) This war has put a heavy but no new strain on our doctrines of the divine providence and the divine immanence. The world has always been in a state of eruption, and yet men have always maintained their faith in the ruling presence and power of God. His plan necessarily runs through and controls the thunder and lightning and storm of war as certainly and surely as through the sunshine and prosperity of peace. His sovereignty is able, in ways too deep for us to understand, to turn the wrath of man to his praise, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain, however tremendous and violent may be its sudden outburst. Gravitation lets no atom slip out of its grasp in the explosion of a volcano or a cosmic collision of stars, and much less does divine providence let any strand of our human world slip out of divine control. Electricity and chemical affinity and all physical forces operate with as irresistible certainty and as absolute exactitude in the throes of an earthquake as they do on the calmest and brightest day. The sunlight, always pouring forth from the sun and beating upon the earth, diffusing itself through the whole atmosphere, penetrating the soil and quickening every root and leaf, is not stopped by cloud and storm and is unsullied by the murky air through which it shines and the slime on which it falls. In a similar way the divine immanence

persists through the convulsion of war unaffected by its unprecedented violence. God is in his world in sunshine and storm, peace and war, on the bloodiest battle field as on the most fruitful harvest field, and is ever the immanent God. Yet he maintains his own sovereignty without infringing on human personality and responsibility and keeps his own purity unstained by all the sin and crime of the world in which he is immanent as Sovereign and Savior.

(3) At this point we may well inquire what effect the world war has had and is having upon men's faith in a personal God. Has it crushed this faith with its intolerable weight of woe, or has it stimulated it to its highest and most heroic endeavor and mastery? The general experience of men has been that great trials and even the greatest disasters confirm rather than destroy faith. Job in the midst of his accumulated and unspeakable losses and sorrows rose to the occasion and exclaimed, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Men often meet appalling calamities in this spirit. In the darkest night of despair the stars of faith flash out. Great crises call forth the deepest and most primal needs and powers of men, and then they rise to their supremest heights of faith and achievement. A great battle is a challenge to win a great victory. The war has been the greatest call to

faith and courage the world has ever heard. If there be no God to give meaning to it all and lead men to some worthy outcome, then the world is only a crazy ant hill disturbed by the thrust of a sword and is the wildest absurdity of a disordered dream. Men fly to God in such an hour as their refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

This has been the effect the war has had in a large degree on the faith of men. This effect perhaps was greatest in the trenches, where the need was most terrible and most intensely realized. It was commonly said that there were no atheists in the trenches and that one had to go far back to where it was safe before he would find skeptics. The evidence on this point was abundant and accumulated in countless private letters and personal testimonies and published articles and volumes.

In his book, *The Glory of the Trenches,* in the remarkable chapter entitled "God As We See Him," Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson wrote: "A big sacrifice, which bankrupts one's life, is always more bearable than the little inevitable annoyances of sickness, disappointment and dying in a bed. It's easier for Christ to go to Calvary than for an on-looker to lose a night's sleep in the garden. When the world went well with us before the war, we were doubters. Nearly

all the fiction of the past fifteen years is a proof of that — it records our fear of failure, sex, old age and particularly of a God who refuses to explain Himself. Now, when we have thrust the world, affections, life itself behind us and gaze hourly into the eyes of Death, belief comes as simply and clearly as it did when we were children. Curious and extraordinary! The burden of our fears has slipped from our shoulders in our attempt to do something for others; the unbelievable and long coveted miracle has happened — at last to every soul who has grasped his chance of heroism quick-coming death has become a fifth-rate calamity."

In a notable article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July, 1917, Maurice Barrès, a member of the French Academy, gave extracts from private letters written to their friends by thirteen young French soldiers, all of whom afterwards perished in battle. "Every one of these biographies," wrote Mr. Barrès, "would tell of the deepening of the soul; and in the inner sanctuary of these different souls there burns the same fire. Have you noticed that they speak constantly of God — that they pray?" "In this war," said the writer of one of these letters, "the spiritual element dominates all." These young Frenchmen probably did not differ religiously from others of their class before the war, but this fiery baptism cleansed their souls and endued them

with power from on high and turned them into flaming apostles of faith and heroism and sacrifice. "This spirit of religion," says Mr. Barrès, "pervades this whole generation." France with all its reputation for skepticism and frivolity has found its soul in this war and profoundly believes in God.

It may be, as some reports indicated, that the churches in France and England were not as well attended during as before the war, which can be at least partly accounted for by proper causes, but the spirit of religion has been broader and deeper and has pervaded these nations with faith and prayer. God has been very real in the thick of this terrible cataclysm and men instinctively fled to him for refuge and help.

For the belief of men has been that God has been in this war as a struggling and suffering God. He has been no mere spectator of it, but had his shoulder under this burden also. It is true that we were confronted with the fact that the Germans, while inflicting their most infernal frightfulness and atrocities, also claimed God as being on their side, and the German Emperor, who in his flight made such a pitiful spectacle of himself, confidently spoke of God as his private partner. But we believe there was and is a right side to this war that stands for justice and liberty, democracy and brotherhood, and that God is ever on the side of right.

Jesus Christ fought our Civil War, as the event has proved, and we believe that the Son of God went forth to win this war. God was in the camp and down in the trench to give efficiency and spirit to munitions and men. It is true he gave equal efficiency to German shells, but this war was not won in the long run by munitions but by morale, not by shells but by souls. The spirit of men decided it, human ideas and ideals won it, and God has been in this spirit and these ideals. That God was struggling with us in this awful strife has been a fundamental element in our faith and courage and confidence. "God himself," says Senator Elihu Root, "was on our side."

At various critical points in the war the Allies seemed to be lost. The first overwhelming onslaught of the Germans on Belgium, the first pitiful appearance and futile resistance of the English "contemptibles," the first Marne, the terrible drive of the Germans in March, 1918, and their second break through the Marne on their way to Paris in the following July — we now know how tragically near to defeat and confusion the Allies were at these points. And as we look back over these events it is a dim eye that cannot see the interposition of Providence. "Was it possible," asks Victor Hugo in his graphic account of Waterloo in *Les Miserables,* "for Napoleon to win the battle? We answer in the

negative. Why? On account of Wellington, on account of Blücher? No; on account of God. Bonaparte, victor at Waterloo, did not harmonize with the law of the 19th century. Napoleon had been denounced in infinitude, his fall was decided. Waterloo was not a battle, but a transformation of the universe." So may we say: Was it possible for the Kaiser and his hosts to win the war? No. Why? On account of Haig and Petain and Pershing and Foch? No; on account of God. The Kaiser, victor in France, did not harmonize with the law of the 20th century. He had been denounced in infinitude. The stars were fighting against him. The Marne was not simply a battle, but a transformation of the universe. Out of such a war God does not come wounded and limping, but marching in the greatness of his strength, and through its smoke and mist his personality looms up in clearer certainty and greater sovereignty.

(4) Let us, however, before leaving the subject, take a broader view of the world war and see if we can set it in a larger framework that will help to sustain our faith in God. The first view of the terrifying spectacle was that all things human were being consumed in one vast and final conflagration, and it would not have been hard to believe that the apocalyptic days had come, when " the sun shall be darkened, and the moon

shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."

But a deeper and longer view has restored the sanity and serenity of our judgment and reminded us that destruction is usually in order to construction. The fiery volcano, belching forth far-flung destruction and death, spreads lava that presently crumbles into fertile soil, and soon its very scorched, scarred slopes are covered with richly burdened vineyards and orchards. The storm that sweeps in destructive fury over the earth leaves fuller streams and greener fields and bluer skies. A fire in a city burns down old buildings that are soon replaced by imposing modern structures. Many a church or college has gone down into ashes to rise in a more capacious and beautiful building. Into the glowing blast furnace go raw materials of ore and coal and coke to come out as molten streams of iron that is tempered into steel and fabricated into all the structures of our material civilization. Into the melting pot of the goldsmith are cast all manner of outworn jewelry to be melted and refashioned into new and more beautiful forms.

The huge melting pot of the world at war has been no exception to this general principle, but is only its vastest and possibly most beneficent application. It may have been hard to see and believe this fact amidst

all the blinding smoke and flame and confusion of the war, and it may be still hard to see it amidst its widespread ruin and wreckage, but the day will reveal it, and we shall know in time that all things work together for good and shall wonder at what God hath wrought. The fearful destruction of our Civil War was the construction of a more solid and glorious republic, with a flag saved from the rent of disunion and cleansed from the blot of slavery, and God is now building a better Europe and a better world.

The fundamental meaning of the war, at first obscured in the smoke of its outbreak, is now shining out clear. It has not all been a mad welter of insanity about nothing, but it was a tremendous struggle of democracy with autocracy, and all nations are being cast into the melting pot of freedom. Russia has fallen as one huge continental mass into this crater and almost in a day has melted into democracy. Its elements are more or less dissociated in the initial stages of the process, but they are sure in time to be recast in the molds of law and liberty. The old Russia is gone forever, and the new Russia, it is hoped, will take its place, it may be after long trial and travail, among democratic governments. Autocratic Germany itself has been undermined and destroyed by the very war it started. The German people are now in

the travail of a new birth and through grave perils and great pangs will be born, it is hoped, as a modern constitutional or republican nation.

Out of the ruins of the old world we already see the promise and potency of the new world that is to be. Potentates are growing smaller, and the people are growing larger. Thrones and crowns are being replaced by parliaments and presidents. The war at last definitely turned into a gigantic and determined war against war in which war wrote its own doom. All these old and new terrible engines of destruction have made war more difficult if not finally impossible in the future. The world is at last drawing nigh to the realization of the vision so long beheld afar by prophets and poets, when nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and shall build the parliament of man and the federation of the world. Out of such travail will come the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth social righteousness and peace. Our whole social fabric, industrial, political, educational and religious, will be reconstructed along the lines of the new era. Already yesterday seems far away and we are rapidly moving into the new to-morrow. God is abroad in his world, saying, " Behold, I make all things new."

Such a view of the outcome of the war sustains our faith in God. He still sitteth upon the circle of the

heavens and ruleth amongst the children of men. Faith in the personality of God will have no difficulty in maintaining its life and power in such a world. These lives that flamed up and burned out as fuel in this awful world conflagration have not been uselessly wasted, but are the sacrificial price and means of a new world. Their blood will be the blessing of a thousand generations to come and will ever keep the world green and beautiful.

Our faith in the personality of God in these trying times, as in all times, will be vigorous and fruitful as we turn it into fact. Obedience is ever the convincing organ of knowledge and sweeps doubts from the field as it presses on to victory. Belief in God accepted as a mere creed and as a result of logic and controversy, the personality of God maintained as a mere proposition, is likely to be pale and impotent; it is ever resting on an insecure footing and at any step may slip and fall. But faith that girds itself up for patient well-doing and fights the good fight of faith in God and in a better world gathers strength from the conflict and is sure of the rock under its feet. If we doubt whether there is a God and then do nothing we shall presently live as though there were no God and slip down to a lower life; but if we live as in the presence of God and do all things as for him, we shall

grow sure of him and not fail to catch visions of his face. If we believe, with William James, that the universe "feels like a real fight," and with Donald Hankey that "True religion means betting one's life that there is a God," and then make the venture and plunge into the fight, we shall be able to declare, with Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.

Worlds are charging, heaven beholding,
Thou hast but an hour to fight;
Now the blazoned cross unfolding,
On, right onward, for the right!

XI

THE VALUE OF PERSONALITY

The lines of thought we have been pursuing converge to their conclusion and climax in personality as the supreme fact and worth of the universe.

1. Personality is the supreme worth of our human world. All theories of his rank admit that man stands at the top of creation, the highest and finest product of evolution. His erect form and upward looking face distinguish him among animals, and his whole physical organization, brain capacity and mental power lift him out of their class. His moral and spiritual nature elevates him still higher, and he alone among creatures known to us is crowned with personality. This is indeed a crown that gives him sovereignty and a scepter over creation. He captures and trains into nimble servants all the forces of nature and subdues the earth and turns its wilderness into cultivated fields and splendid cities. His soul secretes civilization, and the whole vast material structure of our human world is simply the outgrowth and extension of his personality.

In his science man reveals the rank of personality

as he reaches immeasurably beyond his hands and even his eyes into the world as it recedes into the infinitely small and stretches away into the infinitely great. Through his microscope he peers down towards atoms and electrons, and through his telescope he gazes out through boundless spaces. Standing on this tiny earth he throws his net out into the star-sprinkled splendor of the night and catches suns and systems, sifts them through his fingers, and analyzes them into their elements. By means of his spectroscope he seizes the nebulæ, filling with their filmy substance and faint light vast regions of the sky, and drags them into his laboratory and crushes them into his crucibles and extracts from them the secret of their constitution. He turns up the rocky leaves of the globe and reads in their hieroglyphics the history of a hundred million years. He glances backward through illimitable vistas and sees suns condensing out of nebulæ, and forward through far-stretching æons and sees them cooling until their fires are extinguished and they are finally coffined in ice. He grasps the universe in its grand law-saturated totality in which no atom ever gets out of place and no star ever shoots a forbidden ray. He relates the near to the far and the small to the great in one organism of interworking unity and exquisite sympathy from molecule to mountain and from gnat to

zodiac. He sees that every star lends a friendly ray to the rose and would not dare deny that the fragrant breath of the rose is grateful to the constellations. He perceives that

> Rings of wavelets on the water,
> Circling flights of butterflies,
> Interweave themselves with orbits
> Of the planets in the skies.

He knows, with Mrs. Browning, that

> No lily-muffled hum of summer bee,
> But finds some coupling with the spinning stars;
> No pebble at your feet but proves a sphere;
> No chaffinch but implies the cherubim.

And with William Watson he can

> See that each blade of grass
> Has roots that grope about eternity,
> And see in each drop of dew upon each blade
> A mirrow of the inseparable All.

And yet man's science, while more spectacular, is of subordinate value to his art and ethics, sociology and politics, education and religion. His soul blossoms out into the glorious products of his poetry and painting, sculpture and architecture and music. He builds government and dreams of a parliament of man. He studies social problems and perils, feels the sorrows of society, and strives to construct a social order that will

give to every human being the opportunity and the means of a worthy and beautiful life. He climbs the stairway of philosophy to catch a glimpse of the Ultimate Reality, and in religion he rises to his highest and best as he sees and serves the one true and living God.

Character that is pure and true, good and beautiful and blessed, has value above every other possession and power and is the supreme worth and final end to which all other things are means. This is the diamond that scratches every other stone, the inner worth that outranks and outshines all outer wealth. And character is found only in personality and is its crown.

Personality is power. It is the master force of human civilization, without which coal and iron and steam and electricity could not forge a beam or build a hut. It is this power that makes the great statesman, general, orator, preacher, artist or leader in any field. It was by the force of personality that Demosthenes swayed Athens, Cæsar mastered Rome, Paul drove the wedge of the Gospel into Europe, Luther created the Reformation, Napoleon dominated the kings of his day, and Lincoln liberated a fettered race. It was the personality of Columbus that, amidst the fears and appeals and threats of his cowardly sailors as they cried out against the terrors of the unknown sea, held

the prow of his vessel ever westward, every morning keeping it in the track of the sun and every evening driving it deeper into the night. It is personality that makes great discoveries, writes great books, paints great pictures, achieves great triumphs and heroisms, and carves names high up on the pillar of fame. Almost every great historic achievement is the lengthened shadow of some great personality. Personalities are the mountain peaks of history that mark the culminating points in the range of events and lift the level of their region. And yet even the greatest personality and most splendid genius only discloses and pushes into blazing prominence the worth that is at least lying latent in the humblest human being and even in the little child.

In our human world all things are interpreted in terms of and derive their worth from personality. Soil and shower and sunshine, mineral and vegetable and all the physical energies of nature, have their value determined by their availability for human use. The reason an acre of ground in Europe or America is worth so much more than one in Central Africa is to be found in the human persons that live on it. Take all the people out of a rich and splendid city like New York or London and its value would vanish and become one with Nineveh and Tyre. Nothing in our human world

has any worth until it is related to human use. Man's presence must be indicated in the wildest waste to give interest even to a painting.

More and more our civilization is exalting the worth of human personality from the top to the bottom of society. It is this sense of the supreme value of personality that has struck the fetters from the slave, elevated woman, and is throwing protection around the child. The worth of simple personality is being raised above the ancient rights of property. It is this that has brought thrones and crowns crashing down in the great war that may be the last world convulsion, in which democracy is asserting itself against despotism and personality against brute power. It is this that is also dissolving and leveling special privileges and social distinctions of royalty and nobility and wealth and is flooding the world with democracy. It is this that is ringing out false pride of place and blood and ringing in the common love of good; that is ringing in the valiant man and free, the larger heart, the kindlier hand; ringing out the thousand wars of old and ringing in the thousand years of peace; ringing out the darkness of the land and ringing in the Christ that is to be.

And so all things in our world converge and climax in the supreme rank and worth of human personality. Take man off the earth and it would fall to the level of

a dead world such as we see in the moon, and even below this, for the moon has value as related to man. Of course earth and moon and all worlds must have some worth other than that due to man, but such worth must be derived from their relations to some other persons or to a Person, for viewed simply as material globes their whole value vanishes.

And the value of man's personality, we must believe, reaches beyond this world into the infinite and eternal. A being of such worth was not made to perish as an insect of an hour and be cast as rubbish to the void. If the world has climbed up the slow and painful and inconceivably long process of evolution only to blossom in the human brain, which then withers into dust and leaves nothing as a permanent result, the whole stupendous system ends in utter futility and irrationality. We refuse to believe in such absurdity, putting all our powers and hopes to confusion, and we trust all our instincts and our reason and faith in believing that life means intensely and means good, and such good is only reached and crowned in immortal personality. This supreme worth of human personality is a solid stepping-stone on which we mount up to the infinite worth of the infinite Person.

2. Personality is the only adequate explanation of the universe. We are disposed to think we have dis-

covered the explanation of a fact or event when we have traced it to some law and fitted it as a link or cog into a mechanical system; and we further seem to think that such an explanation rules out God. Some one has said that when we discover how a thing was done our first conclusion is that God did not do it. This is why the doctrine of evolution at first was received with exultation in some circles and with alarm in others. Even Huxley thought it ended teleology, and some theologians thought it was atheism. And so to some minds the theory of the world as a mechanical system in which all things interwork as cogwheels and move one another is an ultimate explanation of it.

But this explanation really explains nothing. Such a system cannot begin itself or order its plan or supply its energy. We immediately know order and plan and energy only in our own intelligence and will, and then we proceed to extend and apply these inner principles to external things. We look upon human behavior as it goes on in business, society, politics, art, literature, religion, upon the whole swarming ant hill of our human world, and we infer in these moving bodies the presence and activity of souls like our own. The whole human spectacle is meaningless until we thus interpret it, and personality instantly lights it up with this inner power and explanation.

An extension of the same principle puts intelligence and will behind and within all the appearances and activities of the universe as its inner reason and energy. We can really understand these activities only when we interpret their order and plan as the work of intelligence and their energies as the exertion of will. The universe also, like our human world, is rationally understood only as we interpret it in terms of personality; and then personality becomes our ultimate explanation, which cannot be explained but must be accepted as at once the initial and the final fact of existence, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Dr. Borden P. Bowne works this view of the world out in his luminous way in his *Personalism,* which we again quote:

> The most familiar events of everyday life have their key and meaning only in the invisible. If we observe a number of persons moving along the street, and consider them only under the laws of mechanics, and notice simply what we can see or what the camera could report, the effect is in the highest degree grotesque. A kiss or caress described in anatomical terms of the points of contact and muscles involved would not be worth having in any case, and would be unintelligible to most of us. And all our physical attitudes and movements seem quite ridiculous whenever we consider them in abstraction from their personal meaning or the personal life behind them. What could be more absurd than a prayer described in physical terms of noise and attitude, apart from the religious meaning? Or what could be

more opaque than a description of a scientific experiment in terms of bodies and instruments, apart from a knowledge of the problem and of the unseen persons who are trying to solve it? But the grotesqueness in these cases does not exist for us, because we seldom abstract from our knowledge of personality so as to see simply what sense can give. These physical forms we regard as persons who are going somewhere or are doing something. There is a thought behind it all as its meaning and key, and so the matter seems to us entirely familiar. Thus out of the invisible comes the meaning that transforms the curious sets of motions into terms of personality and gives them a human significance.

Dr. Bowne proceeds to apply this principle of interpretation to literature, history, music, government, war, battles, and to show that "the whole contents of human life, in short, are invisible, and the spatial is merely the means of expressing and localizing this unpicturable life; it has only symbolical significance for the deeper life behind it." Finally he extends the same principle to the whole visible creation and concludes that "for us nature is only an order of uniformity, established and maintained by an everliving and ever-acting Intelligence and Will. Nature is a function of the will and purpose of the ever-present God."

The immanence of God is thus the rational groundwork and cause of the universe, launching it into existence and acting as the inner intelligence and will that constantly sustain it and give it all its order and plan and purpose, energy and activity, beauty and joy and

blessedness, and coming to its highest expression in finite beings in this world in man. This is the final and only adequate explanation of the universe, and in it we rest. This is the

> Presence that disturbs us with a joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.
>
> — *Wordsworth.*

3. Personality is the only true and worthy view of God. The truth of a view is the first and fundamental aspect of it, but its worth is also to be considered and enters into the question of its truth. Our whole argument has converged upon the personality of God as both true and good, and it need not be recapitulated here except in a few words. Personality in man is a reflection of the same power in the First Cause of man, and nature itself reflects the same image. Religion and revelation focus their light upon the same truth. This view is the only adequate explanation of the universe. Take a supreme Personality out of the world, and it has no inner light and meaning and no originating and sustaining cause. Put this Personality at the

center of the universe and immanent in it, and it is at once lighted up as a glorious temple of science and art and religion. Deprive God of personality, and he instantly sinks below his conscious creatures or evanescent manifestations of mind and becomes a fearful specter of unconscious fate.

Personality is worthy of God, for it is the highest form of being and in him reaches infinite perfection and power; and it is worthy of him, for it endows him with all the moral and spiritual attributes of personality, holy character and conduct, truth and purity, righteousness and goodness, mercy and forgiveness, kindness and love, sympathy and service and sacrifice. All virtues and graces are in him raised to their highest possible degree and combined in perfect proportion and poise and power. He is as beautiful as he is blessed, as blessed as he is good, and as good as he is strong. The Heaven of heavens cannot contain his glory which streams through the creation as through a dome of many colored glass and irradiates the universe with the beauty of his holiness. Compared with faith in a personal God deterministic monism and materialism and pantheism and agnosticism are as starless night compared with midday. We ought not and will not believe in the personality of God unless we are persuaded of the truth of this view, but we are assured by every prin-

ciple of reason in our minds and by every spiritual instinct and high hope in our hearts that he that sitteth upon the throne of the universe and ruleth amongst the children of men is a personal God and Father of our spirits.

4. The personality of God is the only explanation and guarantee of our own personality. Our personality is a mystery in its origin. It seems to come up out of the womb of an unconscious abyss, but we cannot believe this is its real origin, as though it were a jet shot up so far above its source. Its origin is revealed and explained only when we know that "trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home." Then spirit comes from Spirit and intelligence from Intelligence, and our fundamental axiom of thought is not contradicted and put to confusion. Then the mystery of our existence and all the mysteries of finite existence are swallowed up in the one ultimate and irresolvable mystery of God, and at last we rest on an explanation that cannot be explained.

And, further, the personality of God is the only guarantee of the reality and worth and permanence of our own personality. If his personality does not exist, then ours is a shadow without any substance and thus is emptied of its worth and will presently vanish. If we are only bubbles of foam on the ocean of

the impersonal infinite, we shall burst as do all bubbles and leave not a vestige behind. When God's personality is resolved into fleeting manifestations of a pantheistic substance and disappears from human thought, then man's personality grows indistinct and fugitive and disappears from human faith. Then human life grows cheap and morality and religion and all the things of the spirit fall into the flesh. It is ever the highest that holds up the lowest, the sun holds all the planets in their orbits, and when the central sun and attraction of the personality of God disappears, our human world will go crashing into ruin.

"Belief in the personality of man," says Professor George P. Fisher in his *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, "and belief in the personality of God stand or fall together. A glance at the history of religion would suggest that these two beliefs are for some reason inseparable. Where faith in the personality of God is weak, or is altogether wanting, as in the case of the pantheistic religions of the East, the perception which men have of their own personality is found to be, in an equal degree, indistinct. The feeling of individuality is dormant. The soul indolently ascribes to itself merely a phenomenal being. It conceives of itself as appearing for a moment, like a wavelet on the ocean, to vanish again in the all-ingulfing essence whence it emerged."

The sun mirrors itself in all the dewdrops, but when it goes down by night or is obscured by day all these reflected images of its glory vanish. When

the personality of God disappears from or is obscured in the sky of our faith our souls will no longer clearly reflect his image.

5. Finally, the personality of God affords the only complete and worthy satisfaction of all our needs. The pragmatic principle that truth works receives full vindication at this point. Theism works in the intellectual field, for it issues, as we have seen, in the only adequate explanation of the universe. The whole search of science is founded on faith in an intelligible world, and such a world is possible only as the creation and expression of an intelligent Mind or Person. Our science and philosophy and all our thinking can find their expectations realized and be satisfied only as they find themselves in a personal world. Unless we are in such a world all our thoughts are but evanescent and meaningless phosphorescence; but in a personal world our minds are at home and shall be satisfied. God is then the unexplored field of all possible knowledge, and all the glories of science and art are but gleams of the ever fuller and more splendid revelation of truth that shall shine out of the Fountain Light of all our seeing.

Our affectional and social natures also find their

realization and satisfaction only in a personal world. The human soul is intensely social and absorbent in nature and cannot live as an isolated individual. All its faculties and fibers reach out after and seek to twine themselves around other souls. Life is love more than anything else, and deprived of this warm atmosphere and rich nourishment it droops and withers. God hath set the solitary in families, and only as heart is wedded to heart in sweet union and communion does life satisfy its own deep yearning instinct and nature and realize itself at its richest and best. This affectional and social life finds its congenial soil and vital root in faith in a personal God, for this only gives full meaning to human love and crowns it with immortal worth and hope. Robbed of this faith, human love is only another fitful illusion and delusion, but in the light of this faith it is a shining strand of the love of God, which, ideally at least, will ever grow stronger and finer and never be broken.

The fullest and profoundest satisfaction derived from the personality of God is experienced in our moral and religious nature. Conscience demands a Lawgiver and Judge to set up a standard of right and bestow rewards and impose retribution. If there is no personal God, the universe has no Supreme Court

and Judge, and our moral sense is left without authority and meaning. But under the rule of a personal God our moral life takes on solemn significance and eternal value.

Deeper still is the religious nature which ramifies our whole constitution and reaches with all its tendrils after a personal God. The immortal childhood within us cries, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." This great cry rises from the whole earth and is deeper and more urgent than any other human need. If there is no personal God, this infant in us is crying in the night, and there is no answer. But in the presence and providence of a Father who has begotten his children in love, the religious longing of the human soul finds an answer in peace and life more abundant and everlasting, as surely as the bee finds honey in the flower and the migrating bird finds a sunny southern clime. God has not proved himself true to every instinct in the animal world and then turned false to this deepest instinct of man. In him as a personal God and Father man lives and moves and has his being, and then faith is a living fact and force, prayer is the natural and necessary speech of a child to its Father, obedience is loyalty, love, and trust, service and sacrifice are a joy, and our very sufferings and sorrows are the divine discipline without which

> We had not been this splendor, and our wrong
> An everlasting music for the song
> Of earth and heaven.

Faith in a personal God is a practical force that turns all life into worthy and satisfying service. All our powers of body and mind and heart are made for activity and cry for it as the body for bread and the mind for truth. In an impersonal world there is no such worthy service, for human activity means no more than the twitter of birds and the hum of bees. There is nothing better for us to do than to eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But theistic faith transforms all life into a field of duty rising to eternal issues, in which we may highly resolve to render the most strenuous and self-sacrificing service and fight the good fight of faith. Men are then immortal souls capable of helping and saving one another and of serving and glorifying God. Children are to be educated and trained in character and conduct for this service, and all life in the home and community, business and society, country and world, is to be turned into this channel.

The world presents a tremendous problem and inspiring prospect to such faith and faithfulness. It is now a scene of more or less disorder and degradation, but it is capable of being rebuilt into a social order in which truth and purity and justice and brotherhood

shall prevail and be the opportunity and blessing of all. All the barriers that separate men into antagonistic classes are to be leveled, and humanity is to be welded into one organism, which may find political expression in the parliament of man and federation of the world. The Kingdom of God is to come in widening sweep and power until its ideal, which has so long hovered in the imagination of prophets and over the horizon of the world in various dreams, shall be realized. Christian faith looks for a city of glory in the heavenly country, but it is also building a copy of this city down in this world. Its jeweled walls are even now rising around our horizon, and we are laying its golden pavements right under our feet. This is the meaning and object of all our work and worship, sanitation, education, missions, scientific and industrial, social and political and religious progress. This progress often seems painfully and pathetically slow, but it is steadily moving toward its goal as the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns and through the shadow of the globe sweeps the world into a better day.

Deny and destroy faith in a personal God, and the vital nerve of this human progress and hope will be benumbed, but deepen and intensify this faith and every force of human good will be reinvigorated. This fundamental truth of the personality of God, that to some

minds may seem abstract and remote from practical affairs, a mere theological dogma, if really worked out in all its applications and implications, would solve all our problems, individual and social, national and international, and build a new world of beauty and blessedness. Only the vision of theistic faith contains in it the prophecy and potency of this victory.

All things run up to God for their final explanation and satisfaction. "We cannot study a snowflake profoundly," says Professor Tyndall, "without being led back step by step to the sun." Strange that the great thinker did not see that another step would lead him up to God. Nature and the mind of man, science and philosophy and art, history and ethics and religion, conscience and spirit and all the immortal instincts and needs and aspirations of the human soul cry out after the living God. Our hearts have a passionate need and longing for him which no doubts can hush and which exclaim, "Though he slay me yet will I trust him." If the Great Companion is dead, the human heart is given a stone for bread and the universe is turned into irrationality and despair. But shew us the Father and we find in him the master Light and Love that turn our life into light and love and reveal a shining path that runs through this world and leads out through the gates into the eternal city.

> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

We have come to the end of our study. The various roads of thought and meditation, feeling and aspiration, faith and hope we have been traveling have converged upon the affirmation, "I believe in God!" This is the greatest affirmation the human soul ever makes, the "Everlasting Yea" that underlies and overtops and gives foundation and worth to all other affirmations of truth and value. This is the central column that sustains the whole structure and weight of a rational and good world, which, being removed, would let it all crash into ruin; it is the inner light which irradiates it with meaning and glory, or, being extinguished, would leave it dust and darkness at the core. This central fact and faith being once accepted, all other doctrines of religion, revelation and providence and prayer, incarnation and miracle, become natural and easy as rays from the sun. This is the one final mystery that explains all others. This belief is constitutional and instinctive. "When the Master of the universe," says Emerson, "has points to carry in his government he impresses his will in the structure of our minds." This faith is stamped upon every fiber of our being and is one of the "truths that wake, to perish never." This ineradicable constitutional faith is the

great background of all our reasonings which would stand secure should all its outposts of logic fall. Yet this faith must also come out into the light of reason and then it is confirmed and stands stronger as the decision and demand of our total nature. Difficulties still and always will environ this faith; but "it is incomparably more free from difficulties," says Dr. W. N. Clarke, "to believe in an all-embracing mind endowed with goodness than to deny it." The modern world has greater need than ever for this faith, for this need grows with all its growth. The world is now growing into unity and facing greater problems and perils and grander visions and victories than it ever dreamed of before. The ages are culminating and climaxing. God is the great Necessity, the final explanation and completion of all things,

> The fountain light of all our day,
> A master light of all our seeing.

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